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Athletic Identity

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ATHLETIC IDENTITY

by

Gregory Camillone

B.A., Lasell University, 2018

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Science

Department of Mass Communication & Media Arts
in the Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
May 2020

RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

ATHLETIC IDENTITY

by

Gregory Camillone

A Research Paper Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Science

in the field of Professional Media and Media Management

Approved by:

Jan Thompson, Chair

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
April 7, 2020

AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

Gregory Camillone, for the Master of Science degree in Professional Media and Media Management, presented on April 7, 2020, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: ATHLETIC IDENTITY

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Jan Thompson

Limited data exists in college athletics about mental health conditions, while physical health remains the higher priority. In order to contribute to the limited understanding of student-athletes' cognitive behavior, a documentary on collegiate student-athletes is produced, utilizing athletic identity as its main theme. Furthermore, the documentary shares personal experiences of how athletes have handled the transition from athletic role to an alternate identity, and how that change effected them mentally.

The purpose of this study is to present evidence from a Division I athletic program to contribute towards answering the following questions:

- 1) Are collegiate student-athletes struggling mentally with life after sports?
- 2) What programs are in place to assist collegiate student-athletes with the transition?

It is hoped this study will inform the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and collegiate athletic programs about the cognitive behavior among collegiate student-athletes as they transition into life after sports. In addition, encourage institutions to implement strategies that'll assist student-athletes successfully transition both professionally and mentally.

PREFACE

For any individual, a major life transition can be jarring. In an athlete's circumstance, transitioning to life after sports can introduce negative psychological effects dependent on how heavily the athlete identifies with the athlete role. Athletic identity is a cognitive structure that is developed and strengthened throughout the course of an athlete's career as the individual builds upon their skills and self concept as an athlete. Given the immense amount of time an athlete dedicates to their sport to reach their maximum potential, it's difficult to find an alternative that produces the same level of fulfillment. *Athletic Identity* showcases Division I collegiate student-athletes sharing their transitional experiences and provides insight on how to prepare for life after sports.

Odds can sometimes play against athletes, such as injuries or even out of sports situation, such as what we are experiencing now with COVID-19 (Coronavirus). Furthermore, the conclusion of an athletic career can sometimes come sooner and unexpected. This is why it's important to prepare.

Athletics contributes additional benefits to an athlete's life than the sports themselves. For instance, sports is how many athletes socialize, it provides purpose, and can often be an escape. Therefore, an athlete loses much more than the sport itself when their athletic career concludes which is why the adjustment to an alternate identity can become complicated. Feeling lost during this transition can lead to isolation and even depression. Given such circumstances, it's critical strategies and programs are implemented in order to support and prepare athletes for life after sports while also acknowledging they are not alone in this process.

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PART 1
TRANSCRIPTS

GENESIS EWELL TRANSCRIPT

Audio File: 000_190926

Greg: [00:00](#) First, just start by stating your name and where you're from.

Genesis: [02:56](#) I'm Genesis Ewell and I'm from Memphis, Tennessee.

Greg: [02:59](#) What is your major here at SIU?

Genesis: [03:02](#) I am majoring in exercise science with an emphasis in motor behavior.

Greg: [03:07](#) And what inspired you to take that route?

Genesis: [03:10](#) Um, my baby cousin, I have four of them, so like the second oldest, she has autism and so I kind of want to work with autistic kids and like, um, just try to find different ways for them to like kind of have a sense of normalcy. So I thought about occupational therapy at first, but motor behavior's a little bit more like trying to understand why they do the things that they do. So

Greg: [03:31](#) Was that your original plan when you decided to attend Southern Illinois?

Genesis: [03:34](#) No, actually, I majored in criminal justice. And then I realized quickly that was not for me... like, at all.

Greg: [03:42](#) What about it? Was it too much work? Or did you find something else that interested you more?

- Genesis: [03:45](#) Too much. Too much reading. Too many rules as I'm more of a science person than criminal justice, and justice system, and all that stuff.
- Greg: [03:56](#) Uh, what are some of your hobbies? Favorite things to do.
- Genesis: [03:59](#) Other than track? I mean hang out with my friends, the few friends that I have, I like shopping, I like eating, a lot. I like traveling, but of course with track, I already do enough of that. But, you know, trying to travel, you know, outside of track, I really want to do that more in the future.
- Greg: [04:19](#) What kind of travel? Like domestic, international?
- Genesis: [04:21](#) All of it. Honestly, I want to go everywhere.
- Greg: [04:24](#) Do you have any, any places in mind?
- Genesis: [04:27](#) I really want to go to Santorini, Greece. Like, I have to go there. It's so beautiful there. Like, looking at peoples' pictures on Instagram, I have to go there.
- Greg: [04:38](#) Tell me about how you feel to be a senior, graduation coming up. Feel nervous at all?
- Genesis: [04:44](#) It's scary. Um, I already stressing about grad school, GRE, what am I going to do once I get done. My track career is over, so I'm just like, go pro, or, what am I doing. It's scary. Kind of stressful, but I'm excited because this is a big accomplishment for me.

- Greg: [05:08](#) Tell me a bit more about that balance. You mentioned go pro, grad school, is it possible to do both? Are you leaning toward one over the other?
- Genesis: [05:16](#) It's possible to do both. Um, I feel like it might be the same deal as here. But I'm not sure how that goes, because I know grad school is a little more, just uh longer classes, later in the day, which I'm used to early in the morning, short hour long classes. So, I feel like it might be okay to balance both, but i don't even know. I don't even know if I want to go for right now.
- Greg: [05:45](#) What's the dilemma? Seems like you're unsure.
- Genesis: [05:51](#) Um, I don't know if I want to keep doing this. Putting my body through stress. It's hard, you know, hurting all the time and trying to figure out how I'm going to heal myself if I'm constantly putting pressure on my body. But, at the same time, it's like I like to do this, track is my life and I want to keep going with this. Ehhh, right now.
- Greg: [06:14](#) Okay, understood. Ultimately, after graduation what would be your ideal, dream job?
- Genesis: [06:23](#) Um, I'm not sure yet. I can still say the occupational therapy route, um, at some point. I really want to do some research with motor behaviorist hat's why I have the

emphasis. So if I can do research and get paid for that, that would be idea with like, track on the side. We'll go with that in a perfect world. We'll have to see what happens this semester and next semester.

Greg: [06:49](#) For audience purposes, can you give a statement for the camera, I'm a track & field athlete for SIU and I participate in these events?

Genesis: [07:04](#) So, I am a current student-athlete at SIU, I run track. I run the 200, the 400, the relay with the 400 and the occasional 4 by 1.

Greg: [07:08](#) Okay, cool. Perfect. Um, can you mention some of your career accomplishments?

Genesis: [07:38](#) Um, six time MVC, All time MVC, um, four time MVC champ in the 4x4, west regional NCAA qualifier, umm, and some other stuff I can't even think of right now.

Greg: [08:11](#) Let's take a step back. Why track & field. Where did it all start?

Genesis: [08:20](#) Um, it started in middle school actually. I was a cheerleader before doing this. We were in middle school PE, I don't even remember what we were doing; we were just running back and forth. I was of course faster than the other kids, and my coach was like you should come out for the track

team. Try out and see if you like it. I was like, uh, I don't know. I still wanted to cheer; that's what I thought I wanted to do. So of course track was like in the spring, so about February to May or whatever, and uh between those times I was doing other things like volleyball, I did basketball at some point, I was still trying to cheer, but I threw that in the garbage and then track season rolled around. I was like you know what, okay, I'll go try it. He asked me to, so why not? Didn't expect anything. Went out there, went to my first meet and won it. I was like, oh, okay cool this is kind of fun. A lot of people were like, that's just beginner's luck, this that and the third. I was like, no it's not. So I felt like I had to prove myself and kept doing that. It was fun for me, so why not continue?

Greg: [08:57](#) Alright. So, uh, so you would say the satisfaction comes from proving the doubters or is there like a high from it? Like what do you enjoy about it?

Genesis: [09:35](#) Um, definitely proving people wrong for sure. I like winning. I don't like the concept of losing. It puts me in a really bad mood. And also, with talking about me going pro, it's something I want to do for my mother, she taken care of me obviously for my whole life. I want to give back

to her. So, I'm trying to do this for her, alongside of just proving people wrong, and winning, cause at the end of the day, it's like all for my mom; that stuff doesn't really matter to me. It's for my lady, so.

Greg: [10:06](#) Okay. So was she your main supporter growing up?

Genesis: [10:09](#) Yes, for sure. My dad wasn't really around, or, he was really inconsistent in my life, and of course when I was younger I didn't understand it. But as I'm getting older, I'm understanding it more and I'm leaning more toward my mom. you know I got you, you got me. She's my best friend. I have to do all of this for her.

Greg: [10:28](#) Does the situation about your dad fuel you at all with track & field?

Genesis: [10:31](#) No, he's nonexistent to me right now.

Greg: [10:37](#) Um, did your mom play any sports growing up?

Genesis: [10:40](#) Um, no. My mom was in band, I don't even know how she got into that. I was in band, but I wasn't into it like she was. so I think I did it for like a year. She wasn't really a sports person, but she likes me. She likes watching me do sports though. That's fine with me.

Greg: [10:56](#) So what was that relationship like? Say like you lost a meet, how was that interaction?

- Genesis: [10:58](#) First, there will be tears, and um, I would get that pep talk from my mom. My mom is all about tough love. Which I'm totally used to at this point, so like, if she's being tough on me, it doesn't make me cry or anything. she's like you know, you got this, but you gotta do XYZ to get better. I take that criticism, like okay, well let's get back on the track so I can practice because I have to win this next meet.
- Greg: [10:58](#) Yup. Okay. Alright. Growing up, was there any pressure for you to get involved with athletics?
- Genesis: [11:36](#) No, not at all. I pretty much had the freedom to do anything that I pleased. Anything that I was really into. I just never really thought about track as something that I would want to do until like my later years of school. So like I said, I was always cheerleading, I did band, I did gymnastics for like a hot second too. So um, there was no pressure. My mom was like you want to do it? Okay we'll put you in classes, that's fine.
- Greg: [12:01](#) Going back to your high school, or middle school coach recruiting to come try out for track & field, how did that make you feel; to be wanted like that?
- Genesis: [12:11](#) Um, i didn't think about it at the time. I was just like, okay, I'll come out. Yeah, cool. I mean, never put in forth the

thought that somebody saw potential in me. I obviously didn't have it in myself if I didn't think about it that much. But as i got in to the season, and through my years of high school, I was seeing it for myself. Oh, okay, I can do this, I'm just as fast as these other girls. I'm glad he saw that potential in me, so I can see it in myself.

Greg: [12:40](#) Cool. Um, what happened to your cheerleading identity when you became more of a track and field athlete?

Genesis: [12:50](#) Um, she disappeared. Cheerleading was just gone. She was very timid I guess you could say. I was a little softer and kind of in the shadows. But, since I've been doing track, I've kind of got a rough exterior now and I'm a little more focused and challenged. I'm a little aggressive. you know, I'm like I have to win. There's nothing else I want to do but win, so that soft, timid stuff, that doesn't work in track.

Greg: [13:18](#) What uh, what brought that out? Was it just the taste of winning and now you can't get enough?

Genesis: [13:22](#) Um, it was honestly my first losing race. In high school, like, I won't say the girls are slow, but they kind of were. I never thought, oh somebody can beat me. And then one day this girl did, and it was just whew, tears. I was just like how can she beat me? And then of course me and my mom had

that conversation. She was like you can't cry every time somebody beats you. There's going to be somebody out there that's faster than you, this that and the third. And I was like okay, cool. So, the more we practiced on that and getting me more aggressive with my competition, the better that got and it was more aggressive Gen and cheer Gen just kind of went down and out the door.

- Greg: [13:32](#) Any regrets choosing track over cheer?
- Genesis: [14:07](#) Nope. This is the best thing I've ever done, honestly.
- Greg: [14:11](#) Cool. Good, good. Um, at what point would you say you knew like you were good at track?
- Genesis: [14:19](#) Um, I probably say, um, between like my sophomore and junior year. Because I never thought about running collegiately, I just oh I'll finish out high school, go to college; cool. But then I started getting recruited my junior year and was like oh okay, I really need to start taking it seriously. I'm already decent enough, like, I need to take it to the next level. Of course I did some research, like, how do I get faster, like, I'm obviously trying to go to college, this is paying for college. And so, I had never lifted until my junior year of high school. And I never put the connection that lifting would make me run faster. I mean it

happened anyway, so I started lifting and I just gradually got faster, so that all just kind of tied in. I was like, all these schools want me to go to their school, so like okay cool, I'm good with this; this is what I want to do.

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Greg: [00:00](#) So, would you say it was the attention from the schools that kind of inspired you to pursue track? Or was it also your love for it too?

Genesis: [00:21](#) I would say both, honestly. Cause, the thought of schools wanting me there, them paying for my education. That was a deal breaker for me and my mom, of course, cause college is expensive. You know little scholarships here and there, but this is a big scholarship. But also for my love for it. Even if I wasn't getting recruited, I'd still try to walk on to somebody's team. I don't think that was going to stop for me either way.

Greg: [00:43](#) So you've talked about all the good parts to track. Any parts to track & field that do not give you joy?

Genesis: [00:58](#) Um, I honestly say the workouts. Everything behind the scenes. A lot of people don't see, like, what we go through, like, collegiate track & field is extremely taxing to our bodies. So, working up early, super early, to lift, to go

practice. We have classes throughout the day, so that's stress. Then after class, we have practice and depending on what we're doing that day, it's a lot. You know what I'm saying. And after that, we'll have a meeting or you'll have homework; it's a lot of stress. Stress isn't good for the body; you're just kind of all over the place. But those workouts really be killing me, because you're asking your body to like do a lot of stuff in such a short amount of time, especially in my events. So, mmm, I just be crying at practice, I don't want to do it. But I'm still here.

Greg: [01:57](#) Um, Go into detail. Are your legs tight? Sore from the workouts? What is it that's mentally tiring?

Genesis: [02:07](#) Um, honestly all of it. Just the thought of coming to practice. I've done track for so long, it's kind of like the same thing. It's a variation, but the same routine every day. I'm always hurting. Even with the treatment we have, I'm always hurting. I'm always tired. I'm always sore. But I have to push through it, cause at the end of the day I'm getting paid to do this. They're expecting something out of me. And the pressure is really high for me considering we went to nationals last year and I'm putting self pressure on myself and coaches are like you know, you have to get to

nationals again. So I'm trying to turn my body up more and more this year than I did last year because I know what I want to do.

Greg: [02:50](#) You mentioned self pressure. Um, tell me about your expectations for yourself.

Genesis: [02:55](#) So you know, 2020 Olympics are coming up really soon. I'm a little far from the goal that, you know, or the Olympic standard. I have to drop my time 3 or 4 seconds, and for a 400 meter dash it's easy but difficult at the same time. So, in my head, I have to run you know 51:35 to qualify for the Olympic qualifiers. You know, I'm trying to figure out how I'm supposed to do that from now until July. I can't help, I have to be great this year, you know what I'm saying. So, of coarsest hat comes from practicing well, that comes from winning meets, um, during our regular season, comes with winning conferences, and qualifying for nationals as well. If I don't make it to any of those points, how am I supposed to make it to the qualifiers.

Greg: [03:48](#) So, give me both sides of it. What happens if you do make it, what happens if you don't?

Genesis: [03:55](#) Um, if I don't make it to the Olympic qualifiers, I'll be heartbroken, I'm not even going to lie to you. I feel like I'll

be a little lost, cause that mens the end of my career, even though I could possibly do post collegiate, but at that point, I feel like I might be extremely defeated, and I'm not going to want to do it anymore. But, on the plus side, if I do go, of course the goal is to make the Olympic team, like cloud 9 from there. You can't tell me anything.

Greg: [04:24](#) We talked about some of your achievements here at SIU> Do you consider yourself a champion? I mean you have the title, the metals, but do you consider yourself one?

Genesis: [04:40](#) I have to. At this point if I keep that mindset that I am a champion, I become a champion, the actual title, the medal, the plaque, so yeah I definitely do. I can't say, you know I'm one of the best sprinters on the team, but I have to believe it within myself in order to succeed with the things I want to achieve. I don't know how else to explain it. It's just the way it is.

Greg: [05:00](#) Talk about, kind of the, surrounding reactions of being identified as a champion.

Genesis: [05:21](#) Can you elaborate that question a little bit?

Greg: [05:24](#) Yeah, so is there an air when you're around other people. Like when you walk to class, is there an added attention? Does anyone say congratulations?

- Genesis: [05:31](#) Okay, this specific university I don't think they're really sports heavy except for the football and basketball team. Even though I will gladly say we win more championships than they do, people like to, some people know me, but it's not like added attention. But um, the newcomers and some of the younger teammates. They kind of know the people here and what we've done, so it kind of puts me in a like a leadership position. But it's not added attention to me. I'm just like them. They can be faster than me. I can't hold my head up like I'm better than. Like I can't do that because we're all here for one goal, and that's to win conference.
- Greg: [06:16](#) Going off the self expectations, how do you measure success?
- Genesis: [06:25](#) Um, I don't know. I just, I have to win everything, that's my success. If I don't win everything, I'm a loser. That's just the thing in my head. I might not be a loser, but to me, if I get second place, I'm not going to be happy. Like outdoor, I got second place, I was not happy. I'm not really satisfied with
- Greg: [06:50](#) What, where is that passion coming from on you? What's the hate for losing? Was there a prior experience that stung you and resonates?

- Genesis: [06:56](#) I don't like the feeling, the fake ness of good job from the first place winner. No, not good job. Obviously not good job if i didn't beat you. No, I don't like that feeling. I kind of feel like they're being condescending. It's good sportsmanship, but I just don't like it personally.
- Greg: [07:18](#) So what happens when you don't meet the expectations you set for yourself?
- Genesis: [07:24](#) Um, I honestly get really, really frustrated with myself. I'm really hard on my self, especially in practice. I try to go faster than the times that are given to me. I don't need to do that, but I tell myself anyway if I run faster, then I'm going to be faster. And, putting in technique, and everything, it all falls alongs when we're doing workouts so, all of that just kind of ties in together
- Greg: [07:51](#) With those expectations, is it just you setting them? is there any added level to them from coaches, your mom?
- Genesis: [08:01](#) Yeah, um, more so me and my coaches. My mom knows what I want to do, but she's there supporting me every step of the way, but it's just more me and then coaches, and it's all just kind of a big bubble that's been surrounding my head right now. So, they know what I want to do, I know what I want to do.

- Greg: [08:23](#) What would you say is your why for competing?
- Genesis: [08:32](#) My why, definitely my mom. My why for just anything is my mom. Bottom line, Of course, I want to do other stuff. Not, per say fame, but I want to be an influencer and inspiration to other people, so that's kind of like my why too. Of course, I want to get paid for it, I mean who doesn't it? But my biggest why is my mom, I mean she's my everything. If I make her proud, Im good. I'm set for life.
- Greg: [09:12](#) Uh, let's see. How would you say your goals have changed from when you first started competing to now?
- Genesis: [09:21](#) Um, like freshman year competing.
- Greg: [09:22](#) Yeah. Uh, well, like yeah, well like ever since you started track. You stated before that, you know, like you didn't realize that was something you wanted to do and now you're talking about Olympic, Olympic qualifiers. So kind of talk about that. How did that transition come about? Was there a particular moment? A certain influence?
- Genesis: [09:34](#) So, like I said in high school, I was just doing it just cause. i started getting faster, I start realizing I can do something with this. You know it's a possibility, I have to try. Going from not expecting anything to like hey you gotta try and could possibly qualify for the Olympic qualifiers and

possibly compete with the Olympic team. I can say, I'm more like passionate, I'm more focused, and I'm more challenged driven now. I would say I didn't have any goals in high school, or like even my freshman year of college. I just wanted to make a name for myself. Oh I'm not going to do anything, then I get put on the 4x4 and we won my freshman year. And I never expected that out of myself, so I think that probably drove me more to be like okay, I need to sit down and write down exactly what I want to do. I know I want to come back next year and win the 4x4, I want to make the finals for the 400 because I didn't that year, I want to do this, I want to do that. So, I will say, I'm more goal driven than I was back then.

Greg: [10:29](#)

Do you actually write your goals down?

Genesis: [10:41](#)

I do, I do. They're all on sticky notes on my mirrors.

They're everywhere in my apartment and it's a constant reminder everyday, like this is what you need to be doing.

Even on the days that I'm down, I don't want to go to practice, I'm kind of dreading it, I don't want to do this, I have to look at it be like okay, I'm doing this for a reason. I can't just, you know, quit. So those sticky notes help keep me going and serve as a reminder.

- Greg: [11:02](#) I love that. Um, let's see. What inspired the uh, the tattoo on your back, upper shoulder area?
- Genesis: [11:13](#) Um, I mean that's just my love for track. I feel like such a, a headaas. Everybody has like, you know a track symbol on them. but I have to have a track symbol on them, but I have to have a constant reminder you know this is what I love. Track has made me who I am. It's kind of a part of my identity and I feel like it's going to be with me the rest of my life so why not get a tattoo that's going to be on my the rest of my life.
- Greg: [11:35](#) I remember that was like one of the first shots I ever took when I came here.
- Genesis: [11:38](#) Yeah. When we were in the weight room.
- Greg: [11:40](#) Yeah.
- Genesis: [11:41](#) I want to get it touched up. I want, I want more detail on it cause it's kind of simple so that just, I want it to look nice.
- Greg: [11:46](#) More to it? How would you make it bigger? Are you thinking a full sleeve down the arm?
- Genesis: [11:46](#) I would probably extend it and put more detail in it and stretch the wing out down my arm. I want hat type of stuff. I can't tattoo everything up. I still have to get a job, but um I just want it bigger. It looks simple, cartoon right now.

Greg: [12:06](#) Okay. And tell me about your other tattoos.

Genesis: [12:09](#) Alright, I have so many. Blessed, right here, because I am blessed. Every day I wake up, thank God, you know, I'm able to do this because you know it's more than some people can say. My elephant, that was kind of a tribute to my mom because, we were going through some stuff and elephants are a symbol of strength, so you know this is a constant reminder, you know, be strong for my mom, you know, she is strong for and it's on my quad, it's strong; why not. Proverbs, chapter 3 verse 5 and 6, that says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lay not on your own understanding, in all your ways, acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths." That is a verse I live by every day. No matter what. It's wake up, think about, go to bed, think about it type deal. Um, just going back to Christian references, you know God is with me. He is why I'm here today. What else do I have? I have a tattoo right here. I have a matching tattoo with my mom. It's just like a swirl with like a lady and a daughter with a heart in the middle. Um, and then I have keep the faith like on my shoulder kind of going up to my neck with some doves just to like, a concept reminder to keep the faith.

- Greg: [13:22](#) Awesome. I was actually going to ask you about that verse cause I saw it on your Instagram bio.
- Genesis: [13:27](#) Haha, look, see I answered your question.
- Greg: [13:31](#) You mentioned faith, tell me about your faith, faith in God.
- Genesis: [13:59](#) Um, I feel like I wouldn't be able to keep going without him. Um, like right now I'm kind of in a rough path, I think a lot of people are in a rough patch. Just stressed with classes, stress of practice, especially since coach likes turning it up a notch, and um it's really easy to forget about, you know, God, or feel like he's forgotten about me. And that's not the case. I have to constantly remind myself to you know pray, meditate, take time out to you know, talk to God and so i wont feel like this. I feel like prayer is the key to success. Without prayer, I don't think anything goes.
- Greg: [14:37](#) What religion do you practice? Are you Catholic, like....?
- Genesis: [14:43](#) No, just, just, just God, yeah.
- Greg: [14:47](#) Talk to me more about what you plan on pursuing after graduation. You mentioned grad school, going pro, does grad school include staying at SIU or going somewhere else? If not, where are you looking? What interests you? Has anyone caught you out yet?

- Genesis: [00:00](#) I plan to go somewhere else. I plan to go somewhere in Texas, mainly because they have more of my emphasis, like grad program wise. Um, SIU would kind of be like a last option type of deal. But right now I'm looking at other types of schools. As far as like pr life is concerned, ideally I want to do it of course after NCAAs, but I mean, I don't know, that'll come with time. I'm not trying to rush that or anything. That also comes with even if I want to do it after NCAAs.
- Greg: [00:42](#) Cool. Uh, what would it feel like if you're not competing after college?
- Genesis: [00:51](#) I don't even want to think about that. I feel like I would be a lost a little bit, like what do I do now? It's been such a part of my routine, like I wake up thinking about track. I go to sleep thinking about track. Oh track this, track that. Meet this, lift that. I feel like I'm going to be looking so lost, like oh okay what do I do now? Like I have the whole day to do whatever, what do I do? Uh, that's a hard question. Cause, I'd feel lost. I don't even want to think about that.
- Greg: [01:18](#) Would you say it would be hard to find something else with that same focus? Track has been something you've committed for years of your life.

- Genesis: [01:20](#) I mean, I could coach. But I don't really know if I want to coach. I don't know. I probably gotta find me a hobby. After this, I need a hobby cause I'm going to be so lost.
- Greg: [01:27](#) Okay. Um, you talked about a little bit, uh, behind the scenes. What people don't see. Uh, talk to me about that a little more. What someone who's never participated in college athletics, what would they not understand?
- Genesis: [01:57](#) Um, I don't think they would really understand what we have to go through like in a day. Talking to like my friends who like don't do athletics, they're always asking me, hey can we do this, can we do that. Let's go out on a Tuesday. I can't, I have to wake up. Oh well just skip it. No, like they don't understand the concept. I guess they think it's like a choice, which technically it is, I don't have to do this. But I kind of have to if I want to continue reaching my goals and pay for school. So I can't just, oh go out on a Tuesday even though I have 6:45 a.m. lifting. Um, and then as far as like the stuff that we do throughout the day, I could write you a list that would be this long that I have to do throughout the day. It's just so much and I'm always so tired after the day ends, eh I'm tired. You're always tired. I'm sorry, it's just like if a workout just kicked my ass for the day, I'm not

going to want to anything. You have to respect that. and they don't. And I've lost friends because of that. Um, I've lost a lot of friends. Simply because they don't understand, but of course as the years have gone, they'll be like oh we see you do this. You see why I couldn't go out that day, okay.

Greg: [03:23](#) Uh, Would you say the lost of friends, the sacrifices have all been worth it?

Genesis: [03:28](#) Eh, I'm kind of indifferent on it. It doesn't make me a difference because I've learned that my true friends, we're on the same mission, we're all trying to do the same things. So, it didn't hurt me that I lost friends because of that.

Greg: [03:49](#) Let's see. How would you say media has played a role with your experience as an athlete? You know, social media is huge now.

Genesis: [03:58](#) Um, social media has definitely helped my team get the exposure that we need. Especially like since our new coaches have come in. With our old coaches, we barely got, we got pictures at practice, we barely had pictures from competition. That kind of sucks. They update our Twitter every day, but that's it. Like people want to see, you know, us do what we do. Simple as that. Since the new coaches

have been here, we got the stuff of course we wanted, you know the pictures, the updates, interviews, this that and third. Um, so social media has definitely helped with exposure for sure. It's kind of opened up some doors for some people as well. Oh well I know a couple teammates have not like a type of deal, well... I don't want to get them in trouble. Um, one of our throwers, oh well he's not here anymore, he's got a shoe deal with like some throwing shoes so that kind of like opened up some doors for him. He kind of like does his thing with that. Um, and of course they love track, so alumni they reach out for us. Especially if I like needed a job in the future, I could call someone and be like hey, you know I need a job, I was doing this, this, and this, and yeah I was on the track team. Oh yeah I was too in whatever year. I think that definitely helps with us, but more so on focusing on the exposure on what we do and what we have been doing and people have been congratulating us on the things we've been doing.

Greg:

[05:31](#)

Gotcha. Um, but more exposure, there's more attention to it. So do you ever feel like that reflects back negatively? Do you like go through the comments and you're like, why is this person hating?

- Genesis: [05:42](#) No, I actually haven't run into any negative comments. I hope not, that'd be a real downer. But that would just add more fuel to my fire. Everything's been pretty good. It'll be oh congrats, go Salukis, and that makes me happy. It definitely makes me want to do better so people can be proud of us. Like, hey those are the Salukis. I want them to be proud to be a Saluki.
- Greg: [06:07](#) Cool. Um, talk about your identity as a woman in sports
- Genesis: [06:15](#) That's a hard one too. People down play woman a lot. Um, I'm going to use an example of NCAAs, just over the summer. Sha'Carri Richardson, she went to LSU, she was only a freshman, she ran a 10:7:5 in the 100; that's unbelievably fast. Like, she's faster than some of the guys on our team. And, just seeing on social media, guy were like oh she's this, oh she that, they were kind of hating on her for that. You know anything that a guy can do, a woman can do better. You know, I think personally. I think she has kind of been a big influence for woman in sports. But as far as I'm concerned, I just, I don't let any of the guys hate on me, or try to bring me down cause I'm trying to run with them at practice. I'm right up behind them and on them. I mean I have to be because I'm trying to run , you know fast

times like the times i want to run in the 400 is probably a temp run for them. So, I just try to prove myself as a woman, even though I feel like I shouldn't have to, but I do anyway.

Greg: [07:25](#) Okay. Let's see. Outside of being an athlete, what do you want to be known for?

Genesis: [07:41](#) Um, why did you ask me this question? I mean, I want to be known for track! I don't know, I want to be known for somebody who is an inspiration to people. I want to be known as Genesis the hard worker, Genesis, she likes challenges. I mean, that still kind of ties into track too. Like I said, track is my identity, I don't see myself outside of that right now.

Greg: [08:11](#) Um, let's see. How often would you say you explore new things?

Genesis: [08:18](#) Not a lot. We don't have time to do anything. The most exploration was at nationals over the summer. We spent so much time there, that was my vacation for the summer.

Greg: [08:31](#) How long were you there?

Genesis: [08:31](#) We there, we left on a Tuesday, and then we came back like Sunday, mid day. We competed Thursday or Wednesday. There was plenty of time for us to relax, have fun, it was

the end of our season. That was the first time I went to Austin, Texas, but like that was it. I didn't do anything else over the summer. I do anything else but train and go to school.

Greg: 09:12 Talk to me about some of the stuff you put on social media. You're into fitness and fashion. Talk to me about some of that stuff.

Genesis: 09:22 Okay, so, we'll start with my personal Instagram. It's just me, my friends, stuff I do every day, track posts or whatever. Nothing bad. I'm trying to keep a good image for the public. I'm representing a brand right now. My fitness page, um, I started that to be like an inspiration to woman specifically, but it doesn't have to be entitled to just woman. Um, and I want to people to feel like oh I can do this, I can be a personal trainer, you know as a little side thing. I like lifting, I like working out, that's always going to be with me. Um, so that type of stuff would be like more of my like track pics. I try to do exercises for people to get a grasp on, oh she can do it, I can do it. That's kind of like my two little things, they will never be pushed together. Hopefully people can be inspired by it. Might as well given I'm already working out and what not.

- Greg: [10:19](#) Um, you've talked a lot about inspiring others with your fitness page, track & field. What kind of impact do you want to leave on the world?
- Genesis: [10:54](#) Because I'm an exercise science major, I want people to be healthy. I just want people to feel like they can get fit, they can look good. I'm a big believer in look good, feel good, do good. I stick with that at track meets and stuff, so if you see me at competition, I always got my hair done, my makeup done. If I look good, I'm doing good, I'm feeling good. But I just want people to, you know, be healthy, stay fit. This is what makes me happy. So I feel like this might make them happy as well. I don't know, we're going to see in the future. And hopefully me inspiring them, they can inspire other people as well. I kind of just want it to grow.
- Greg: [11:39](#) Let's see, uh, how do things you've learned in athletics carry over to things outside of athletics?
- Genesis: [12:03](#) Track & field has honestly taught me to, you know, honestly not give up on the things I have to do. And you know, to not get frustrated because when I was younger, I would always get so frustrated. With here, I promise you I'm frustrated every day about something. But you know, you gotta get over it, suck it up, and do what you gotta do.

It's definitely helped with my work ethic as well. I think I'm a hard worker, and I don't stop until my task is done. So, I've definitely gotten better with like school wise, assignments and stuff, if I start something, I have to finish it. I can't just like, oh leave it, I'll do it later. No. I have to finish it. My passion is definitely gone through the roof of course for a passion for track & field, i mean I've gotten more passion for things i want to do in the future, like i said my fitness page, training, research in motor behavior, occupational therapy, the things i want to do. I've kind of tunnel visioned with my goal right now. I can definitely say track & field has helped me as far as that aspect and what I want to do in the future.

- Greg: [13:08](#) Cool. Um, did I see you have a cat now?
- Genesis: [13:11](#) Yes, I do! Oh my baby, why did you bring up my child?
Haha.
- Greg: [13:18](#) Tell me name, what inspired you to get a cat, the whole story.
- Genesis: [13:22](#) Oh my goodness, okay, his name is Lucas. I got him from the little animal shelter here. Um, he's such a little rut. Every day with my roommate. He's always doing something. Um, I have him registered as an emotional

support animal right now, you know some days not feeling too good, so some days he does make me feel better. Um, but sometimes he's bad as hell too. Um, jumpin' on shit. And we have this other cat, and she's older than him. she's big, and he's like this little. They like each other, but they fight too much and scamper around the house. It's a headache, but he's a joy to have around.

Greg: [14:03](#) The emotion, is it just stress? Are there other things with it?

Genesis: [14:09](#) Um, mostly stress. Um, I can get a little anxious sometimes. Especially if I didn't have a good practice, I get in my head and think okay is this going to show in my competition, and like if I didn't do this one thing at practice, are we going to see it at a meet. So it gets me kind of like eh. He's there rubbing on me and purring and crap, ha. Um, so he's there for that. And I then kind of forget about it. Oh it's a new day, just work on it the next day in practice. So he definitely helps with all that.

Greg: [14:39](#) Cool. Um, is that stuff you ever talked about with roommates? Coaches, mom? Do you have a go-to person you can talk things over with?

Genesis: [14:45](#) Um, definitely roommate because we're like this. We are kind of the same person but have different personalities, so

it's good to have a different, you know mindset in my ear. Of course I talk to my mother all the time. She does her tough love thing even though I might not want to hear it, she does that as well. As far as the coaches, like, in the past I haven't been able to. This feeling comes around, or the same time every single year. I just of course, my freshman year, I didn't know how to deal with it, I was just like well I'm going through the sky myself. And I struggled. So, um, our new coaches have definitely made an effort to try to understand where each of us is coming from. Some people stress is different than others. I don't think mine is bad as I'm making it. But like hearing my other teammates, they're drowning and I'm kind of feeling for them. I feel like my coaches could do a little better with trying to figure out what's going with them, but there's so many of us. I don't blame them for you know not paying attention to as many people because it's hard to do so.

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Greg: [00:00](#) Uh, is there a resource for you guys to talk about that stuff outside of just within, you know, coaches?

Genesis: [01:03](#) Um, I just recently found out, which is really bad, we have a GA, I don't know if he's a sports counselor or sports

psychologist, I don't know. I found out we just got him or something like that. So there's him, but not really; other than our coaches which may or may not help us.

Greg: [01:27](#) Mmm. Starting to wrap up here. Mmm. Advice you would give to other student athletes who are feeling lost about their identity?

Genesis: [01:39](#) Um, definitely, definitely talk to somebody. Nobody is going to know what's wrong with you if you don't open your mouth. My mom always told me a closed mouth don't get fed. So I definitely think you should talk to somebody. Make sure you have that support group that you trust, because you don't want to go through it alone. They're going to help you, you know, push you to do whatever you need to do. Don't stress any more than you already are. And pray. I'll tell anybody that. Just pray and keep the faith.

Greg: [02:12](#) Cool. Um, I have another statement.

Genesis: [02:15](#) Okay,

Greg: [02:17](#) So you'd say your name and then list three things you are and then end it with I am more than athlete. So like mine's Greg Camillone. I'm a videographer, traveler, animal lover and I'm more than an athlete. Does that make sense?

- Genesis: [02:31](#) Yeah, I do. Cause I'm like, what am I? Hmm. I was gonna say this. I'm a track and field athlete. I'm a cat enthusiast. Um, mm. I'm struggling right now. So wait, hold on. Cause I'm gonna forget. My name is Genesis. I am a track and field athlete, a cat lover an influencer, and I'm more than an athlete. Cool. All right, now I've got to start over now, I'm going to laugh. I'm sorry. I'm super goofy. Okay. My name is Genesis. Um, I am a track and field athlete, a cat lover and an influencer and I'm more than an athlete.
- Greg: [03:26](#) Perfect. Alright so that's all the questions I have for you. That is all I have for you. I always end it by leaving you with the floor if you have any additional comments you'd like to add.
- Genesis: [03:36](#) I think I've got a lot of it off my chest. Just tired, tired of it, but I'm not. I can say right now I kind of feel over-trained cause our coach is like pushing everything like our plan up like two weeks. So like what we were doing around this time last year, we weren't doing it for another couple of weeks, so I'm kind of feeling over-trained right now. I'm feeling real drain and exhausted and I'm just like, eh, but I'll make it through. It's worth it at the end. That's all I got for you now.

Greg: [04:18](#) That was excellent. Thank you.

Genesis: [04:19](#) Yay! Okay!

HENRY BOECKMANN TRANSCRIPT

Audio File: 000_191006

Greg: 00:00 To start off, just give a statement of stating your name and where you're from.

Henry: 00:11 I'm Henry Boeckmann. I'm from St Louis, Missouri. I'm a senior.

Greg: 00:17 Cool. And what is your major at SIU?

Henry: 00:21 Uh, my undergrad is sports administration.

Greg: 00:24 Why'd you choose that route?

Henry: 00:26 I switched off a lot. I came in as computer science, big influence, just my dad, I don't know, you make a lot of money doing it. And I found out I didn't like to do that and I got marketing and then I thought sports administration would be more towards, obviously the sport aspect, I want to follow and, and market and sports. So I chose that. Now I'll go pursue grad school for marketing on.

Greg: 00:49 Does your dad do computer science?

Henry: 00:51 He is not, he's a physical therapist.

Greg: 00:53 What inspired computer science?

Henry: 00:53 I don't know, always took the, you know, like you get those like personality test and uh, I take those and they told me for some reason I would get computer, like I'd always get

some computer-ish, like design, style stuff. And then I'd also get like salesperson. So like I had like two ends of the spectrum and I thought it was weird. I don't trust those things as much, but I guess in the end it helped me. I'm kind of in sales-ish.

Greg: [01:17](#) Um, so how have you felt through this sports administration route? Like are you glad you made that transition?

Henry: [01:26](#) I, I'm not very happy with my decision. I am and I'm not, uh, obviously it could be worse. I could have picked a worse major that isn't towards what I want to do. But I think it's too broad. Sports administration has been to like broad for me and kind of like, too easy in a way. I think I didn't challenge myself enough, uh, with my choice. And athletics might've been a like pursuit, like why I did that, like just because I wanted the focus on sports honestly. But, uh, I wish I would've just done marketing straight up and pick that, but then go to grad school.

Greg: [02:00](#) So what, uh, how'd you get into marketing?

Henry: [02:05](#) I had never thought about it too much. Like, I didn't know what I wanted to do, but we have a lot of obviously long trips. And so I just started like looking at my future and a

lot of people have always told me, you're really good at talking to people. I like, I like sports, I like to talk, promoting, I like being creative. And then I thought this was a summer job, this summer internship here for Saluki Athletics. Uh, so I was staying here in the summer to like lift and so I could get stronger for baseball and it wasn't. And I got a call like literally go in two weeks into school and I like totally forgot I had done that. And it was like, I was like, I don't think I'll be able to work this. Like I'm an athlete, like it'll be a lot of time. And Marissa, my boss said it was okay. Like, you know your time. So kind of by accident like is what's crazy. So like where I'm at now and now, like I have a good position. It was all kind of just like an accident just cause I thought it was a summer internship.

Greg: [03:02](#) Um, besides marketing, uh, what would you say are some of your hobbies?

Henry: [03:12](#) Honestly, sports, baseball, basketball. I loved, uh, I like music a lot. Like I like to just chill, like listen to music. A big movie guy. I like movies. Uh, yeah, I like hiking. My family is very avid, like nature people. I've been to some beautiful places in the country, so like we like hiking and I like outdoors stuff.

- Greg: [03:39](#) What was one of the beautiful places that you went to?
- Henry: [03:42](#) This summer I went to Banff National Park in Canada, Lake Moraine, is like the most beautiful, it's like this super bright blue cause like the sulfur for something like with sulfur and like how it reacts and it's like bright blue. It's beautiful. Summer weather is awesome. And we went to glacier as well, national park and it was, the sites are incredible. I saw grizzly from like, like 40 yards away. And the thing is just, they're huge. It's like amazing.
- Greg: [04:06](#) Oh, very cool. Um, what would you say, what would you say is like your ultimate favorite thing to do?
- Henry: [04:16](#) Just play sports. Just like, whether it is baseball or basketball or just like playing I think is just like the best thing. You forget about everything that's going on and like the outside world just for like that specific moment and being competitive and it's just like, it's, there's nothing like it. You can't.
- Greg: [04:37](#) I agree. Um, so tell me how it feels to be a senior, um, graduation's coming up. Are you nervous at all?
- Henry: [04:48](#) No, it feels good. I've never been like, I know a lot of people with school, they want to live college as long as possible. Like, cause they miss it. I've always been a guy

that like, I want to get it done. Like I try to do things as fast as I can to the best of my ability and I'm excited about it.

I'm excited to go to grad school and get outta here and get a job. I'm excited for the real world.

Greg: [05:15](#) What would you, what would you hope to do after graduation?

Henry: [05:20](#) Maybe like just I'll probably spend like a year and a half here for grad school. A lot of people do like two, but I'll see, I'm a very like, I like to get things done. Uh, so yeah, I want to do a year and a half here and hopefully I'll go somewhere in the country for hopefully sports marketing. I want to work in the NBA. I love basketball. Like I'm a very passionate person on sports and so I can't work for like, since St Louis doesn't have an NBA team, it's kinda easier for me to like really get passionate about an organization and like become a fan of that team and stuff like that. So that's why I also like the NBA and that aspect of it.

Greg: [05:56](#) Cool. Um, so it'd be like your dream job working in the NBA?

Henry: [06:02](#) Yes, yes. Uh, it would be my dream start out job. More of my dream job is probably to end back up in St Louis working for the Cardinals or the Blues cause I grew up on

it. I love those teams and I'll, I'd be very passionate about my work and like love to work for them. So that would probably be my dream job as of now. But things may be changed and I'll, we'll see. But as of now, yeah, working for the Cardinals or the Blues.

Greg: [06:28](#) Awesome. Tell me how you got into athletics from like very beginning when you were a little kid.

Henry: [06:43](#) Uh, my dad played college basketball. Uh, his whole side of his family is very, like they'd been college athletes, like all of them went to play college. So like honestly he drove sports in our lives and I have the height obviously see for it. So I don't want to say it's forced, but like you just kinda do it. And I'm, and I loved it. It's all I did. Like I can't remember a time, like when I wasn't playing fall, summer, winter, always playing something, basketball, soccer, baseball. And I just, I loved it even though like it was so much work, it was just like, obviously it's something you love to do so you don't even consider it like work or like a grind. It was fun. So, yeah, I've just been, love watching sports and love playing it. Like, it's just, it is my life. Like I can't see anything else like outside of it.

Greg: [07:31](#) Sweet. Um, how did you get into baseball specifically?

Henry: [07:38](#) Uh, I was never a big baseball player growing, I was very like heavily based on basketball cause my dad played. And so I think that kinda drove a lot to it. But he also put a ton of pressure on me playing. So I think it was, it was, it was one of the reasons I quit and just our high school coaching. And so then I, I just slowly became focused on baseball my sophomore year. And I was like, a lot of people just, just let me do what I wanted to do with baseball and I love playing it. And I was, I was good at it. And so I was super competitive as a pitcher and it was just fun to just be up there. And like, I always found it, I don't know, there's just like something about it. Like I didn't think it was going to be a sport I go to college for at all. I would have told you basketball all day. But yeah, baseball just like once I solely just focused on it. Like I just grew like a huge passion for it and loved it.

Greg: [08:29](#) Tell me about that transition from basketball to baseball.
Um, so you said you quit?

Henry: [08:35](#) I did. I, I, I didn't try out my sophomore year. Uh, and I, I would have been good enough, uh, to, and they asked me to, but I just wasn't, I don't know, there was just a lot of things going on to where like my dad, maybe my dad's

pressure that I don't think he realized he put on me, like and my own that like, I don't know, I just kind of became upset with the game and what they wanted me to do. Uh, as a player, they wanted me to be like a center. And so I wasn't about that. Uh, I was more like, I grew up playing guard my whole life. Uh, just cause like I was always the more like highly skilled player on the team. So I could ball handle and stuff like that. And I knew how to play, like down low, but I just saw like my future wasn't that and I was just kind of upset with it. And so I quit and I just ended up playing like rec with my buddies, like just like a church league. And so that sustain like me just still being able to play basketball. And so baseball was a lot slower. I definitely don't like walk, like if you have to sit the bench watching as much as it's a lot different and like it's tougher. But once I did get to like being really like good and like not so much the star, but just like always being like a constant position, like starting and stuff like that. Like I, I mean it took over. I was fine. Like I was good basketball. I, I'd put it in the past and I mean, I still think about to this day obviously, like, what if I just stuck with basketball? But I, I'm a hundred percent of my decision and, yeah.

Greg: 10:09 Um, with, uh, the whole build up with basketball. Would you say they were just, besides trying to make you the center, were there certain like expectations your dad set on you or yourself that led to some burnout?

Henry: 10:28 Yeah, no, burnout was a huge, I think was by far the biggest thing. I think I put more pressure on myself that I needed to with basketball. I think that led to, I definitely was one of the big reasons why I ended up quitting where baseball, I've always been that sport that like I just played and basketball became like a, he played college and always hear these stories about like he's in the hall of fame in his high school. Uh, I always go to his hometown and like, oh, you're Phil Boeckmann's son. Like, so he was like a big deal and I think I put a lot of that pressure like on me, like, can I match up to this? And some of the guys in my area that we ended up playing, like I grew up in the Jayson Tatum, uh, Tyler Cook, Will Gladson. They all like very D1. Their team was stacked and I was just like, this isn't even worth my time. Like they're going to win state every year. So stuff like that. I always just, there's a lot of like stars. Any given I wasn't in the position I wanted, there really wasn't any reason left for me to play.

Audio File: 001_191006

Henry: 00:00 I was like, I can't play that. I just told myself I couldn't play at that level and I couldn't be like my dad. So I just kinda definitely burnt myself out on it.

Greg: 00:09 Gotcha. Um, talk about how you got into baseball. Like you mentioned that you quit basketball. But, what about baseball attracted you?

Henry: 00:21 My grandpa, my dad's dad played some, my grandpa played uh, baseball and very heavy and uh, that's just like, I always just played it. I don't feel like, baseball is in the summer and there were a lot of another, like there wasn't a lot of other summer sports outside baseball. I feel like I played basketball as well, but like baseball was just like one of those other like choices. And since I was young, like they would always take me to games. My dad always take me to games and just like, I just loved it. Like playing catch even to this day, playing catch to me is like the most satisfying thing ever. I'm not that great at it. I am not accurate. I always got ripped on for how bad it was, like inaccuracy wise, just playing catch cause I wanted to focus up as much but I just like love doing it and there's just things that baseball that I just liked. I loved like pitching.

It's just always been my favorite thing. I always got compared to like Randy Johnson and stuff like that cause I was so tall and I was just like, I've dominated since I was a kid at pitching. So I think that's why baseball is a huge thing for me because I don't know, I haven't failed much at it.

Greg: [01:28](#) Cool. Uh, who your favorite player? Baseball wise?

Henry: [01:33](#) Baseball wise is Yadier Molina. I was, I like Hank Aaron, obviously, uh, just like his story and like the home runs and stuff like that. But like my decade, like my day of age, I would say Yadier Molina. I mean he's the best STL Cardinal like if you think of the St Louis Cardinals, you think of Yadier Molina and I just love watching him play. And, uh, I did like guys like Brendan Crawford and stuff like that. I was always really appealed by the art of shortstop and I was just too tall and left handed, so I can never play it. Like if you ask any of my coaches, I always told them to just let me play one game at shortstop. Like I can do it, I can be left-handed shortstop. And so I always loved that, that position a lot too. So yeah, there are guys like Brandon Crawford, I always used to love like watching his smooth transition. Guys like Javy Baez now at second.

- Greg: 02:33 Sweet. Um, tell me, uh, tell me about the start of you becoming a baseball player at SIU. Like the whole recruitment process.
- Henry: 02:45 Uh, so I actually, some people know about it, some people don't. In high school I quit. I like told coaches no. I wasn't gonna come to college to play sports at all. I, uh, I, I got a lot of D2 offers and some JUCO, junior college, and I was fine with that, but I'm a very heavily like academic based person. So a lot of the schools that like gave me those offers, like weren't awesome academic schools. So that weighed heavily more on like what I did. And also the scholarships obviously in baseball are a lot tougher to come by, like how much you get. And so that was also a factor. Uh, and so I gave, I told my coaches, my high school coaches my senior year, like maybe a third through the season that I was done. Tell coaches no, like I think I'm just going to go to school to go to school. And I was lining up to just go to Bradley for uh digital, like they have like a good video game, like producing program. I love EA sports and stuff like that. So I thought that's what I might do. And so I would just line up to do that. And my buddy, uh, got hurt. Uh, he tore his labrum, one of our starting pitchers

and I became a starter for our team. Like I became one of the stars, did really well and I took over his spot on the summer ball team. Uh, I was like, you know what, like why not the coach sat on the team like I can get you a, a scholarship to any school. And I just decided to go to Meramec. I committed to, it's called Meramec as a junior college in St Louis. I committed to play there. Uh, and it was probably two weeks later, uh, coach Finnigan, PJ here came, and saw me when we played in Memphis and recruited me. And so I just ended up playing college baseball. It was all like this really quick like turn from like giving it up to like actually like then might go in Division I. And I always saw myself, I think that was a thing too. Like, I was like, I'm Division I or nothing. But then I said I'll just do junior college and just get like, just go to school like two years, saved my parents some money and then ended up just going somewhere. Maybe baseball takes me farther. But uh, yeah, it was like this crazy ride of like something. And I was just also getting mad too, cause like I did think I was good enough for Division I. I just wasn't getting those offers. And so I put that high pressure on myself and I was like, you know what coaches like, I'm just done. Like I'm

going to just focus on school and yeah. My buddy got hurt and he'll tell me to this day, like there's like, you're the, I'm the reason you're playing Division I baseball. And I'm like, I'm like in reality, he's right. Like he is. Uh, so yeah, it's, it was a crazy like whirlwind of my senior year was.

Greg: [05:36](#) How did it feel to finally get that D1 attention?

Henry: [05:39](#) Uh, good. It was, I mean it was like a huge shock. Like, cause I was, I had committed to Meramec and I was just, I kinda thought that was the end of the process. Like, uh, no one else is like looking at me and just like to have a Division I out of nowhere. Like when I heard they're at the game, like it was really interesting. Like it was like a high pressure game. It was, but it was cool. Like I wasn't worried about anything and I had done really well. And then we had went to Xavier the next week and I knew they were like also other coaches that kind of talked, but I had already just committed. I like was already dead set on SIU. I loved my visit so I committed here. But yeah, it was like, felt good to start getting like, finally people are seeing like what you knew you could do. And so it was like, it's a very gratifying feeling. It was an acknowledgment feel I guess. Not in an ego way, but to be noticed.

Greg: [06:28](#) Cool. Um, let's see. I guess at what point did you know you were good?

Henry: [06:37](#) Uh, man, since I started pitching. Like, I had so much fun out there. Like I knew I could dominate and I did things up on the mound that like, I would smile when I struck people out. Like I would laugh and like smile. I used to knuckle balls and stuff like that, that moved a lot. I was really known for that. Like I just always had this super competitive and I was like, I don't lose games on the mound. Like is basically all, I was like, I knew I was gonna win the game if I pitched. And so like as cocky as that sounds, it's just that competitive like hubris that you have. And I always just knew like pitching wise, I always knew I was good. Hitting is a whole different story. I was good. I just wasn't strong so I was never as much as people would think, I, I can't hit home runs. I would just hit flare singles and that's all I could just run out. I could just be out ground balls about it. Pitching. I was good.

Greg: [07:46](#) Could you just give a statement like basically just stating your name and then the sport you played here. So you could say like, you know, I'm Henry Boeckmann. You can say I am a pitcher for the SIU baseball team.

- Henry: 08:09 Okay. Uh, I'm Henry Boeckmann. Uh, I played baseball here at the University of Southern Illinois, Carbondale and I was a pitcher.
- Greg: 08:18 Alright. Uh, how would you describe your experience as a student athlete?
- Henry: 08:26 Uh, it's, it's interesting. It's hard and it is, sometimes social media portrays it wrong and also they portray it right. It's just on and off. And it was, I mean, it's really hard. It's nothing like you can handle it. You get used to it. So like you become used to like constantly like working out and stuff like that. Practicing homework, you get yourself on a schedule and it, I mean, it's really hard, but it was, it's still so fun. Like it's the, it's the things you will do to play the sport you love. And I mean, it was an awesome experience and it teaches you how to work hard. Like it teaches, you don't take things for granted. Uh, work your butt off and like you'll get what you deserve, whether it's on the field or academically. And I think it did help me stay in line academically as well because our head coach, Coach Henderson was very good at like us being in class, and we had to be in the classroom. Like if you don't, you're probably running like stuff like that. And so he did a really

good job like you went to class like so like made sure you were always gonna, you're always in the classroom, whether or not you pay attention as you're obvious choice. But I did and yeah, it was as, it was an awesome experience and it was, I mean it was hard, I would say. It's not like, you gotta be mentally like tough to do it and you can tell people who end up quitting and stuff like that. Cause it's, it gets so hard. But I loved it.

Greg: [09:52](#) So hard seems to be the word you'd describe that as. What comes to mind when you're saying that?

Henry: [10:00](#) Uh, so it was like a schedule. Like you wake up, I took a lot of 8 a.m. classes. I don't know why, but you wake up like at 5:15, 5:30 so you can at least make some food like or just put something in your system. You go work out, shower, you go to class and some days obviously you have like multiple classes and you basically don't have much time to eat sometimes. And then you go to the field and you practice for however many X hours, usually two at the minimum. And then like it can be four to five at the max. Cause if you want to do extra work, like get your own work in and then you gotta come home and it's already like seven o'clock, eight by the time you're all settled down and then,

then you got to do like homework. And if you have a lot of homework, obviously some days you don't. But yeah, it was just like a grind, uh, late at night. Like you'd be up super late and you ,obviously you want to like do things like play video games, socialize with friends. And so like you come home and settle down and sometimes you get yourself stuck in like playing video games or just talking to your buddies for like an hour or two. Then you're like, oh no, now I gotta do homework and you're out until like midnight, one, then you gotta wake up at like six o'clock and do like conditioning or something. So, I mean it's hard. That, that's why like it just takes a toll on your body and like mentally, sometimes you can just be so like tired and that makes academics even harder cause then you get into the classroom and you're like, you're just like nodding your head off and stuff like that. And I've done it. I, I fell asleep in class before and I, I hate to say it, but I have and it's just, it's just the tolls you take, I guess.

Greg: [11:39](#) Um, would you say it's overwhelming at times?

Henry: [11:42](#) Yes. Especially once you get in season. Uh, in season is very hectic cause you leave Thursday, there'll be times like we play, uh, an away game Tuesday, a mid week, uh, and

you play Tuesday, so you basically miss all your classes Tuesday depending on how close it is. Uh, you can go to some, but then you, then you end up leaving Thursday, sometimes super early if you have to go far. So you miss a lot of those classes, which Tuesday, Thursdays your class schedule, like you have classes Tuesday, Thursday and you miss both of them that week. And so you're trying to learn something that you haven't even been in classes to see. And so that became like really hard. Like you kinda teaching yourself and you just have to come back like in the class and like if you'd have a quiz that next day, like you have to take it like, so it was just like you had to teach yourself a lot, a lot of stuff. And so some classes who don't put PowerPoints out and stuff like that, it was, it was really hard, uh, to just do well in those classes. And a lot of your teachers will help you out and they will. But I know I'll see some athletes aren't as outgoing like go and talk to them and stuff like that. So I, I know it hurts them more. But yeah, they were times on the road where I was very overwhelmed and stressed out. And so like even when you're in a game and something that's all you're thinking about, like, oh I think I forgot to take a quiz that's tonight.

I'm like, I've had to do that. I had to take a quiz on my phone at Dallas Baptist in like the bus and it was horrible because our game got rain delayed. I was like, I have enough time after the game. Of course our game gets rain delayed, take this huge quiz. I haven't looked at anything on it and so I'm just on the bus like doing it. And it was horrible. I did, I still did well, but like it was just a super stressful experience and like that happens to multiple people and it happens more than you think and it's just stuff like that that can really overwhelm you.

- Greg: [13:35](#) That's a great story haha.
- Henry: [13:37](#) Yeah, it was, it was an interesting day haha.
- Greg: [14:00](#) How would you measure success?
- Henry: [14:04](#) Measure my success?
- Greg: [14:05](#) Yeah. Like this could kind of go into like your own self expectations too. Like how do you, I guess, approach your days and you know, like is it maybe on the baseball field, is it striking everybody out or in the class and getting straight A's? Like what's your measurement?
- Henry: [14:21](#) Uh, I am more academically based, so I think I have been very successful here academically. I've done very well, uh, very good GPA. Uh, athletically, I struggled a lot my first

few years for sure. Uh, and maybe it was just like growing into, I hadn't grown into my body yet. I was very tall and lanky, like, and just all the, all the weight, like lifting and stuff like that. Like you could tell like just in pitching that I was very, like, hadn't fully gotten into my body. And so our first two years, I wouldn't say I was like successful, like as much as I wanted to be.

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Henry: [00:00](#) Uh, but my junior year, even though it didn't go how I wanted it to go, I would still deem it as successful cause I did everything I possibly could to be right. And that's why at the end of the day I'm fine with it and I would deem myself, my, my baseball career as a whole successful. Got me to college, uh, got a lot of my school paid for and I got to play college athletics. So.

Greg: [00:26](#) Awesome. Uh, when you set expectations for yourself, what happens when you don't meet them?

Henry: [00:35](#) They're tough. I'm very hard on myself as a person. Like very, I think it hurts you like mentally a lot. Like you get in your own head and especially when you fail on the field. Like, I, we were up almost like by 12 runs in a game and I gave up like six. I came in like my second time, I gave up

like six and we ended up, the guy after me also struggled to set the bar in and everything just went downhill and we lost the game. And I as a player, you know that's on you like, and the other pitchers can say like they could have shut it down as well, but as who I am as a person, I put it all on me and I mean I didn't talk to people for like the next two days I was so like in my own head. And so like, you get like not like I guess depressed in a way but not like super big depression. It's just like you get negative about everything and you come to the field and like what was really hard as a pitcher is you don't get another, if you mess up, usually don't get another opportunity for awhile unless the game goes south. And so they stick you back out there and I don't think I pitched for like four weeks after that. And so it just sat in your head and you're like, this is like the game that screwed me up. Like, and the next time you go out there and then you think about it like you just, that game is still in your head and like, whoa if we're up right, I don't want to blow this one. Stuff like that. So that was definitely the hardest part about like college athletics, getting and being a pitcher, especially as a hitter, you're going to have a bad day. I feel like you're fine the next day. Like statistics say

you're not supposed to like just, you hit like one for four and that's average. So like, I don't know, as a pitcher, I think it was really tough and definitely put me in some like really bad mental state and which affected me in the classroom and everything. So I think it puts a huge toll on you. Like if you do have high expectations for yourself, which I do. I'm very like, I expect excellence out of myself and that's what my family's like instilled in me. And so if I didn't meet those standards, yes, I was very, I got very in my own head.

Greg: [02:33](#) Um, how would you get over that? Was it, you know, talking with friends, talking with your parents, someone else?

Henry: [02:40](#) Uh, getting over it was definitely like, my dad was a big help. He would always like text me after games. Like if I did struggle and he'd be like, everything's going to be alright, like whatever and give me like a text, like to like make me feel better. My mom was the same. Uh, but I think the biggest part that helped me the most when that happened is talking to my pitching coach, Coach Finnigan and I really hadn't done that until like my late sophomore year and junior year, a lot. Just talked about the game a lot

and I think you're kind of scared to do that and you want to fix things on your own. But like going to those guys who know the game and he's also did it at a high level and has failed multiple times, like helped a ton. Like talking to him was by far my biggest, like, getting over my mental like struggles and like how to cope with like failing and like going out again and being fine cause this is like I hadn't failed a ton in high school and stuff like that. Like my whole career. Then you come here and I was, I was failing like a lot more cause the huge jump on just talent and just how I did. And so yeah, he was a huge, talking to your coach, like talking to my coach is probably the biggest help. And then just some of the players in general, like some of my buddies, a lot of my buddies back home didn't stay in a line and like tell them like with what I did and stuff like that. They would give me a lot of uh, crap for, they knew my, I had a 10 ERA my freshman year and they always just tell him like I could take you yard, like you're not even good. So they, they would joke around, and it did like help them just saying that cause it made me like have more of a joke side about the game. I would thank my pitching coach for mentally accepting everything.

- Greg: [04:35](#) Can you talk about that transition from high school to college? Was there a bit of a culture shock just like you said...
- Henry: [04:47](#) Absolutely huge culture shock. Like my high school, which I thought is, is pretty good at baseball and like we send a lot of guys D1. But like I came here and like guys are huge. Like I am a very, I was a scrawny, I came in at 170, 6'5, 6'6, looked like a twig. Like you could snap me easily and these guys were like putting up some serious weight like in the weight room where I was not at all and it was like a massive like overwhelming like I don't know if I can like am ready for this. Like they were just like, there was a lot more to it and just line ups in general like one through nine are all good players. Like the jump from high school to colleges, unbelievably, like huge. It is way harder. And in high school you had to worry about like three, four guys maybe and college you have to worry one through nine and pitch well every single, like you make mistakes, they make you pay for it a lot of the times. Uh, so it was massive and I think that definitely overwhelmed me a lot and made me feel like, definitely added in like getting in my own head, stuff like that. Cause like am I good enough? Stuff like that

kind of trickles into your head. Uh, so yeah, it's, it's a huge jump. Massive.

Greg: [06:09](#) What would you say is your why for competing?

Henry: [06:15](#) It's just my, my strive to be better than you. Like, uh, just like asking like it's just what I love to do, like showing that I am dominating you is like just the greatest thing ever. Like to show you're better than someone, like at something and to like dominate. Especially like in a team sport it's way better cause like they're just playing, for that end goal, obviously like an MVC ring or making it to the college world series. Stuff like that. Like is way, especially when you practice all the time, like it gives you why when you practice 40 hours or whatever, plus a week, like you want to win because you've worked your butt off to be on that field and like to be better than that other player like and dominate them and, make them, embarrass them is just the greatest. Like that, that's why you do it.

Greg: [07:05](#) What's that satisfaction like? Is there a high from winning?

Henry: [07:10](#) Uh, yeah. Uh, I never got a college win here actually. I had two I think lined up and they got, ended up getting blown saves. But just like when you'd go on the mound, like closing a game, like it's just like an awesome, like after the

game, like your spirits are so much higher and like everything's more positive. Uh, it just makes your, your day slash week however long till the next time you pitch like way better, your practice experience going into next week, you're just, you have good vibes and it's, it's a feeling you can't like match. Like I, I don't know how to describe unless you've done it. Like it's just like a thing like you win and it's just, yeah, it's just kind of indescribable.

Greg: [07:56](#) How would you, you say your, your goals when you first started competing as a baseball player, compare it towards the end of your career.

Henry: [08:08](#) I had a lot higher, I think goals when I came in with baseball. I still had like, I want to be a Friday, we can start, which I still did when I, when I went to my junior year and stuff too. But it became more, less about like becoming a professional athlete and having that goal to just like more so to like the academic side and just winning for your team. It was just playing for your college team was more my goal and doing anything that I can to get a win or to help them in any way possible, became more of my goal. Like if I'm not in the game, what can I do? To make sure, well how can I add to that game to win? Like, I'm very, I was like an

electric factor, I guess is what people would call it and stuff like that. If you ever watch a game you would hear me. Uh, I got into the games like on the, in the, on the bench. Uh, cause like that was another way to get into it. So my goals at first were more like just about me I feel like. And it, it definitely came more team oriented as I went on through my career. But yeah, freshman year was like, so about yourself. Like I want to be a weekend starter, like reliever and stuff like that, like, and what I'm going to do. And I think I had a lot of 'I' goals to where I, once I became sophomore-ish, sophomore to like junior year, that's when I became more like team oriented and stuff like that. I got away from like things for myself.

Greg: [09:43](#) Why did you decide to retire?

Henry: [09:46](#) Uh, I think it was kind of another thing with basketball. Same reason that basketball, I was getting mad with the game. Uh, my last year I had only got to pitch three times. I had thrown up a zero. I did everything I could. I threw up zeros and gave up like one hit my last year. So it was kind of a, I was just kind of mad. I was like, why am I not playing? I feel like I've done everything right. I do well in bullpens. I threw some like the best bullpens in my life and

that span and it was just like, what more can I, I feel like I did everything I could and I just still wasn't seeing the field and I don't know why. I never really got the answer from my coaches or anything. I think more so I can just think about why I did it. So I don't have a full answer maybe as why. I didn't fully bring it up with them. But I just think I was so mad with the game and I was, I never wanted to become a professional athlete. Like I lost that inspiration to like go play pro baseball. I knew that wasn't my end goal, what I was destined to do. Uh, so I think when I got offered a position to be a GA and stuff like that, and they told me, you're going to have to give up the game. I was, I didn't make decision right away. Like, yes, I told her like, I'm going to have to think on it. It depends how this year goes. And I had probably figured out my decision that I was quitting after my junior year. Uh, probably a fourth of the way through the season when I hadn't pitched. I still hadn't pitched forever. Even after like the first, I pitched pretty close back to back. Uh, when I got with some of my first two innings when I did actually start pitching were pretty close. And so I was like, okay, I might start pitching again. But then like two weeks later is when I officially knew, like

I'm done. Like I'm not being used even though I'm succeeding. Uh, and so I just kinda got mad with it and I gave, I gave it up and I'm happy with my decision. In the end, maybe later I'll be like, you know what, if new coaching this year and stuff like that, always have trickled in my head and still to this day, like what if I just did it one more year, but I think this is the best decision. It wasn't just about me. I can get my school paid for and get the degree that I want to get. And so it's easier for my family, easier for my possible future and stuff like that. So it wasn't just like about myself and like just the play the game I love because in the end we all got to hang up the cleats sometime and I realized that like halfway through my year for sure.

Greg: [12:17](#) Uh, this is kind of a two tier question. Um, there's two points. One point when you realize that you didn't want to go professional. Um, was that like a hard thing to process for your mentally or ?

Henry: [12:28](#) Uh, yes and no. There's always really bad stories about professional baseball and like how hard it is. Uh, so that like, I guess I, I'm kinda glad, like maybe I won't have to go through that, but yeah, it's like, cause then you know, there

is an end, you, you know, you have an end on your, you know, the cleats are going to be hung up sometime soon in the next two years. Uh, and so it's definitely like hard to, except the fact that like you aren't going to go professional or like don't want to. Uh, but I guess it's something like, you prepared for like your, you had to happen some time and you just hate that the clock is going to end that soon. And it was hard to cope with for a little bit, but more and more comfortable as I convinced myself, I became more and more comfortable with like giving it up. It took a while, but like I'd finally like changed my goals I guess.

Greg: [13:20](#) And was there any thing different when like towards the end of your junior year when you actually made that decision?

Henry: [13:26](#) Uh, yes. So I, I made my decision and only told a few people. Uh, it was probably, yeah, like a fourth of the way through people like my best friend, Justin Yeager who pitched here, uh, and has gone, and Hunter Heart, were like the only two guys I told like about my decision and my parents obviously knew my decision. And I didn't want to tell the team because I wasn't a guy that was just gonna like make a cake walk of like my junior year and not care.

Cause I still worked my butt off. And if I come in the game I'm going to do what I have to do to win. Cause that's just who I am. But I didn't want to tell my team and my coaches because I didn't want them to think I do something in practice that looks lazy or something. They can take it as he doesn't care and stuff like that. So that's why I never told. And it was hard not to tell people cause it's a big thing obviously like I won't be here next year. And a lot of like the guys that I did, I was playing with them would have still been here. Like it sucked to tell them that but, and it was hard, but I had to do it because I wanted to protect myself from people. Like creating that like bad image on me like that I didn't care because I did care. Like I wanted to win and I want to do anything I could to win. And I still think they would say that like I didn't just back out and just stop, like stop caring about the game and just show up to practice. And just that, just go through the motions. Cause like I still wanted to be the best I could because it's just who I am.

Greg:

14:55

You've mentioned academics a lot and how much of a priority that is.

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Greg : 00:00 Why was it your parents that always stressed that?

Henry: 00:03 Uh, yes, always having like academics, is always the backup plan. Like I guess the backup plan you have, like that's what's gonna overall be more worth something in your life I feel like. Cause you never know. So you do get drafted or, some injuries happen, your game can end way shorter than you know, and if you don't have academics behind you, like it's way harder to get a job. So like that, that's way more longterm. And so my parents stress that a lot compared to uh, like just really focusing on baseball. And it was just something like my brother was very smart, my sister had done really well. So like they had set the bar high, that like the bar was like, you only get A's and B's. Like you can't get a C. Like, and I did get to see my freshman year, fall semester and my dad was like on me. Like, I mean he was like, can you do this? Like very on me. So like bar was set very high from my, just my parents, uh, and my peers. And then also my brother and sister had done very well. So like I knew it's just like you have to like as my family, like you have to do well in school and so it was just assumed and it's good. So like if you do make a mistake like okay I did bad in the class but it was a C and it

could have been, like my bar was, I just want to get a C in this class well then, it could have been a D or something like that. So I did, I did like that my family stressed it a lot and Hindu did as well. Our coach was very like academic heavy.

Greg : [01:31](#) What would you say, the last baseball game that you played, last season, right. How has that felt? Just not competing anymore cause you seem like a competitive person.

Henry: [01:50](#) It, it sucks it like it was very hard to like know, I think when I found, like it was the, literally once I pitched that game I had known that that was probably the last game I was going to pitch. And it was like, it wasn't hard then, I can just like, kinda like give you this fake confidence. I showed up, like knowing like, I, I'll play today, like something like that if something happens, I was ready to play. But once we got into the conference tournament, I had kind of known that that was like the last game I will play. And it was like hard, like even still now, like the fact I can't pick up like a baseball, like I can and go play catch with people. But like, only those people like are on the team right now and here. So like they're obviously practicing

doing stuff like that. So they don't have time for that. But it definitely sucks not having it in your life. Like you don't realize, you don't realize how much is in your life, that was a part of your life. Like that was your life more so than anything else. So like once you, once I'd given it up, it's been very like, hard to like cope with not being able to play.

Greg : [02:56](#) I guess how much would you say you identify with baseball then? Uh, trying to think of a way to word this where, I mean do you think there's another side of you that could find something with the same focus that you did with baseball?

Henry: [03:13](#) Uh, yeah. I try and do like my work and like I try, I try to like, I feel like I work a lot and because I think it's just a way to cope with like how I was and maybe I'm hoping that my job can cope with like, can put that like mental blockage. Like I never realized how much baseball kept a lot of other things out of my head and like just life in general, like kind of stay away and like you don't realize all like the emotions of just life like socially and like all that. And so when I haven't had baseball it's definitely hit me, all that has hit me a lot. And so I try to use my job as much as I can to like just focus on that. But it's a lot harder like, to

like, you still think about life a lot more here. Like the job that in baseball you could just go out there and it was just about the game. So I hope I can find something that does like, I dunno, I don't know yet what it will be, but uh, yeah, I just hope I can find something that like can be that same thing that baseball was or any sport was to me.

Greg : 04:18 What would you say is something that people who have never participated in college athletics don't understand?

Henry: 04:26 Uh, I think it's just like the hard work behind the game. I think these kids like, like just get a lot of like bad credit, like credit, like on like societal, society and like Twitter and stuff like that. I feel like for things they do on the field and stuff like that, like celebrations, stuff like that. Like you read them out and you don't even know what these kids have gone through, like they're celebrating for a reason and yeah, like people lose their heads in sports and like there is a guy like guys on our team have done it, like done some things you obviously probably shouldn't do on the field. But it's like what we do. Like it's like our game. And I think people just like don't give enough credit to student athletes whatever sport they play. And I think it is worse for like lower sports and like the organizations like I don't think

people give enough credit to like golfers and stuff like that. Like they work as hard as we do like as hard as football and stuff like that. And so especially in like those sports, I definitely think society gives them a bad look. They don't like give them as much credit as much as like a football player and a basketball player. Cause everyone works as hard as like everyone else. And I just, I think that's like, uh, I think athletes, college athletes have a very bad image because when someone does make a mistake it gets so blown up and like the good things that student athletes do, like don't get noticed. And so you always feel like there's a target on your back at all times for like anything you do. You can't say anything on social media, you can't obviously post like anything that's semi bad. So like it's tough. Like you feel like your life is controlled in a way

Greg : 06:04 For sure. Outside of being known as a student athlete, what would, what do you want to be known for?

Henry: 06:14 I just want to be known as a, as a good person. Like I've always tried to, like, I feel like I have a lot of good, like social, like people remember who I am because I'm very outgoing. I'm very friendly. Like making sure other people's day is okay, is more important than mine. Cause

that's what makes my day better. So like I do want to be known to be good at my job, like marketing and what I do. But I want to be known more as like just a person that could like make your day better. And that's all that's like, that's the most important thing to me. Just seeing like making someone's day in the hallway. Just like if I talked to you for like that quick second, hopefully I make your day better. And like that's all I really like wanna do. Like I love doing that. I always have a very positive vibe in life. Uh, so I just want other people to have that. I hate seeing people down and being negative cause it's life. Like you only get one shot at it. So.

Greg : 07:07 Sweet. Um, could you just go into detail of what your graduate assistant is, just like your title and what the job entails, like things you do on a day to day basis.

Henry: 07:17 Yeah. Uh, so I'm the grad assistant in marketing here at Saluki athletics. Uh, Marissa, my boss has given me like we get the handle teams. So I do a lot of work with volleyball in the fall. Uh, and then I do a lot of work with, I'll do a lot of work with baseball, so I'll continue to get to work with baseball and do their marketing strategies, promotions like at a game, like we just had a game, a strong

survivor game. And so like I kind of set that up at volleyball, got connections with people who like know people in that organization and they like come out to the game and you come up with themes and stuff like that. And then during the games you do all this in game stuff like at football, make sure you get people out to the on-field recognitions on time and just any promotion that's at a game you kind of are involved in. Uh, so there's a lot to it. I think it's a lot more than like just marketing. Especially like at a smaller university, you don't have as much workers, so you kind of have to do more. But I think that's way better. I think. I mean I ended up having to do like everything. I always say like I'm not just a marketer. Uh, cause you don't just do that like in college athletics like you do way more. And so I could go like on and on when I do in a day that might not even have to do with marketing. But yeah, you just do a lot of promotional stuff for all the teams.

Greg : [08:33](#) Cool. Um, what about marketing made you get involved with it?

Henry: [08:42](#) Uh, I like the aspect of sports marketing cause it's sports and also just like, you're not at your desk as much. Like you still obviously sit at your desk and you have to do stuff.

But I like the more like going out, the talking, the social aspect of it is what I like cause I like talking to people. And then at games like game days are obviously like very fun and kinda bring that like excitement back. Like you kinda have to do things on time, you have to make sure people get on and off the field. Like there's these cool like added pressures to it that like you had in sports. So I think that's, that is also like really cool as well. It makes it hard but it also, it makes it like, I just love that like anxiousness and like the butterflies in your stomach. So I think marketing here is like giving me that and that's why I like it cause it's still like a close field of sports. Obviously not the exact same but it's very similar.

Greg : [09:35](#) I feel like people who work in sports feel that way. Like work in sports to stay in sports. Would you say there's anything that you learned from baseball that has carried over to what you do with marketing?

Henry: [11:43](#) Yeah, cause it's so, it's so much like of a team sport. I think just like collaborating with a team, communication, baseball's a huge like communicators sport. Uh, so I feel like definitely like just talking to like the players and making sure everyone's on the same page. It's like the same

ways in here we're like this is like just one big team. So I think the communication aspect of baseball and just the hard work of it, like I don't work the most ideal hours that like it's just not nine to five or stuff like that. Like, and I sometimes overwork, like I have to work long weeks sometimes just cause a lot of sporting events that week. So I think, and that's just not tough for me cause of baseball. Like I'm used to it and I like that. Like I didn't want to take a break and that's why I was like happy. That like, I got this right away instead of like just being done with baseball and then not getting a job somewhere. And you just like get comfortable with doing nothing. And so I think that's been a huge like thing that's why I don't get tired like I guess at this job.

Greg : 12:49

How, how do you want to be remembered?

Henry: 13:02

I just want to be remembered as a guy who I loved what he did. Like I don't want anyone to have like a bad, obviously, I know I'll get bad images. I guess people won't like me or something like that, but I always just want to be like, this was just an overall like good guy. Like he genuinely cared how you were doing, how like you felt and he like got the job done. Like he made the program better and whatever

aspect or whatever program I'm in, I just want like when I leave I want people to be like, darn that guy is like not here. Like, like I wish that guy was still here and stuff like that and just like known as like a dude who like made people's day better and got the job done.

- Greg : [13:43](#) How would you identify yourself?
- Henry: [13:48](#) Like how do I see myself as a person or?
- Greg : [13:52](#) It's a pretty broad question. Like whatever kind of comes to mind, there's no wrong or right answer.
- Henry: [14:04](#) I just identify myself as like a person for other people, like a man for others is what my high school. They always teach you like be for other people, we before me. As kind of just how I've grown up and been taught. Like, if you do things for other people, God will make sure you're okay. Uh, so like I've always just been like someone who's, who's like super friendship, I identify myself as like making sure others are okay before myself and I'll be fine. And I would just identify myself as a positive person. Like I love my life. Like obviously things go wrong and like I haven't, I feel like I've got the short end of the stick a lot of times, but like that's the way life is. And I just always have a positive outlook on life. Cause you're obviously supposed to be here

at that time, like you're here for a reason. And so I fully believe in that and that's kind of how I identify myself.

Audio File: 004_191006

Henry: 00:00

Or like I'm a very friendship heavy person.

Greg: 00:12

Uh, how would, how would you introduce yourself to someone? So like, say you're meeting me for the first time, or maybe I'm like an employer, you're in an interview with me. How would you want to introduce yourself?

Henry: 00:25

Uh, I'll just be like I'm Henry Boeckmann like, and I just want to, I would not really bring up a lot about me. I would just try and like break you down who you are as a person and find like things we're similar on try and make you feel like comfortable. I know a lot of people aren't like super social. Can kind of be stressed out and so I would just be like, I'm Henry Boeckmann, like very positive about it and like being like, how's life? Like, well, just give me some things about you. And like whatever. I'll find similarities and just build off that. And that's just what I do.

Greg: 00:58

Cool. Um, going off that personality, you always have a lot of energy. You're always smiling. I mean, what fuels that?

Henry: 01:09

Uh, man, I've had some, uh, I just have a really good outlook on life cause of people I've had in my life. Um, I

always had outlook, I had an uncle with down syndrome who obviously wasn't given everything. Like obviously a huge setback in life. Uh, and couldn't really talk much, couldn't communicate much. But like every time you see him you walk in the door to my grandma's house, like he hug you and smile and just make your day better. And I always took like, how can someone in life, me, I've been given, I'm perfectly healthy, everything I've been given, everything. Why do I have, like why can I not be a positive person? Like how can someone who isn't like my, how can my like uncle with down syndrome be so positive and stuff, like have like this awesome outlook and affects so many lives that, how can I not do that? Like why, I have no excuse not to be able to do that. So just like that gave me a good outlook on life and that's why I wake up every day. I'm super positive. I love what I do. I haven't really put, I haven't been in a position where I guess I hate what I do. So like I've always been able to keep that vibe super easily. And I've had some people in my life that have very, like heavily affected me, uh, to be who I am and it's my parents, my uncle, and just like I listen to a lot of like motivational stuff, not just to get motivated on life. I just like to see what

people have to say about things. Like I've seen different point of views on life and, uh, so I think that's helped a lot too, just to give yourself a good look at like why things happen and like if they happen, how to react and like stuff like that.

Greg: [02:45](#) Sweet. Love it. Are there any like particular individuals or someone that comes to mind that you've listened to recently?

Henry: [02:54](#) Uh, I, I always just, I used to listen to, uh, I love Will Smith. Will Smith as a person. I always comparing myself as like the young, fresh Prince, uh, how I dress, how I act, everything. Like I am, like if I got to be an actor I would be will Smith and the Fresh Prince of Bel air. I think it's the greatest show. Uh, so I love his outlook and he's awesome. He does a lot on social media and has always been very positive and like outgoing. And then Inky Johnson, uh, is a guy who's a Tennessee, he used to be a quarterback at Tennessee and he in like a game right before his year he would be, he was eligible to get drafted and was going to be like a top round pick. He hit a guy and it was completely like paralyzed on the field and then lost like his, like his left arm that he can't move at all. And so like here, like he has a

great aspect on life and it's one of those things that like how, can he like be so happy with life when like he had his dream taken away and it made me feel like he was in the same spot. His ended totally different. He could've went pro and like ended differently. But he realized that like he talks about like, this wasn't my overall destiny. Like why couldn't I have, he always like says like, why couldn't I have just gone pro and gotten the money and help out my family and stuff like that. Like honestly God had something else in plan and like I, I liked that cause I feel like I'm not as like much as he was like he had it all taken away. I wasn't going to go pro but like I like his outlook on life just, like you're at where you're at cause you're like meant to be there like it's got, I knew baseball wasn't my overall plan in life and so he like he was a big help. Just listen to him like his aspect on things definitely help how I look at things and like how I am now. Like I'm still positive out even though I had to give up the game I love like, and I would trade anything in the world to play it. Like honestly just play another game but I'm, I'm still happy with everything.

Greg:

04:56

Would you say you're a big religious person?

Henry:

05:12

Uh, yes, I grew up in a very, I grew up in Catholic school system and in my private high school, the Smet Jesuit, Jesuit school, which is a like branch of the, of Catholicism, uh, and my mom is very religious, like very heavily on it. I wouldn't say I do as good as the job as her, but I am very heavily like belief that there is a God and I, I feel like there are occurrences in my life to believe that. Like I feel like I've been in situations where I shouldn't, like I should have like been hurt or something like that. Like how have I been so lucky of a person, certain situations I've been to be where I'm at now. So I truly do believe that there is a God and I'm very, I prayed before every game. One prayer that we always did in my high school, it's called the prayer of generosity. And I'd say it before every game and that was the hardest moment for me in baseball. I, I didn't, I didn't cry until I had to, I went out to pray for the last time at the end of the game when we lost in a tournament and I like broke down, like that's when like it like all hit me and so like that, like it has definitely been a huge part of my life and I obviously sometimes miss mass and stuff like that. And with baseball it made it really hard. Uh, you miss like mass a lot of times, but I did, I would say like, I'm not

afraid to say like I'm a religious person or I'm Catholic. I'm very, I'm proud of it.

Greg: [06:38](#) If you're okay with it, can you just kind of walk us through that moment of the last game situation? I guess just, it just hit all at once or?

Henry: [06:53](#) Uh, yeah, it like, I think I could like convince myself that like it wasn't over like I still had another game like or just something, I don't know what it was, but when I did get down to kneel and pray one more time, like it hit me like hard. I was like, I won't ever get to do this again. Like did I, did I enjoy it as much as I could have? Like I feel like I tried to hide it. Like I tried to act as normal at games just because I didn't want it to be like, I didn't wanna think about and get emotional about it and not enjoy it as much. So I tried to like hide myself from this like emotional feeling and that, that game, like I just couldn't. Like I didn't like bawl my eyes out, but like I got super, I'm a person who just gets like teary-eyed and it's really rare for me to like the cry, like a ton. I don't know if it was just the masculinity thing, like I try to hide it, but yeah, it like hit me like a wall and I just liked that whole drive home and everything. Like that was all that was on my mind. Like I

wanted to be like happy, like whatever. I talked to the guys on the bus but it just like, it just was sitting in my head like I'm done. Like, and it's hard. It's like this huge, it's a weight, it was like a weight lifted off my chest. All this hard work, like I don't have to worry about that anymore, but it also just like a, I don't even know how to describe it. It was like everything just rushed, like into my body and just like, whoa.

Greg: [08:22](#) Did, so at that point, um, did anyone else know that you're going to be leaving the team or was it just?

Henry: [08:29](#) So at that point people had found out, a lot of people, most of the pitching staff had known, I don't know about the hitters. Some of them have known. Because I told them, and I think some other players obviously said some stuff. Uh, and some people have gotten like, had gotten the plan, they're like, this kid's probably gonna quit just because he hasn't pitched a lot. Uh, but yeah, I think the person who didn't know obviously, my coaches hadn't known yet, but Coach Fin had started getting like a, I think apparently I had heard that he had talked, like his wife was talking about like Henry, is Henry thinking about quitting and talking to someone else that I knew and she brought it up with me. So

I think he had kind of known that it was a possibility. And uh, I went on like a hug and last time he definitely knew and I hadn't told him yet. I knew he knew. Uh, just cause like you could just see it in him and like when you like, it was just a different kind of like goodbye-ish. I don't know how to explain it, but yeah, it's just like he found out before I'd even told them. But yeah, most of the players had known by then and then I sent, we all went out. Uh, we all hung out one last time before we went home. And I had obviously told the rest of people that I will not be coming back next year. I'm a hundred percent done and then Hendu found out the next day.

Greg: [09:44](#) Um, couple of things, uh, you said you're kind of trying to hide those emotions. Did you just feel like you couldn't cry in front of the team or was it?

Henry: [09:54](#) Yeah, I don't know. I never like, I just like, I don't know, like maybe like to just like I don't want to see people like me like emotionally weak or something like that. And I know years past like seniors, a lot of seniors they had last game. Like everyone's hugging. Like it does get emotional and like I do get teary eyed. I did like the years before cause like seeing those people go, like very influential

people. Uh, I think it was just my way to like cope with that. It's not over like, cause when I did like, before the last game I had, I hadn't like cried at all. Like I had, I hadn't gotten emotional about it. Uh, cause I just tried to, I think it was just my way of hiding it, that it's not over and like I'll get one more shot and stuff like that. Uh, even though in my head I knew I wasn't, but I just, I think it was my only way of like convincing myself to show up at the ballpark, like ready to play. But yeah. Then once it, I even tried to hide it when I got hit, when it all hit me. I still even tried to hide it like, and I just, I couldn't, it like it was just too hard.

Greg: [11:05](#) And talk about the time when you guys all hung out and you told the rest of the team. Was that hard?

Henry: [11:13](#) I don't know. Not, not as hard as I thought it would have been because then I had already told most of the guys and I think everything from the last game had just kinda like worn off, that it was hard to tell some people like, like, I'm sorry, like I, I won't be here next year. Like I'll be here, but I won't like be playing. And just seeing some of the people's reaction that they were like kinda distraught about that. And it makes you feel good that like, they actually like are bummed that you're not going to be, they're not you like

meant that much to the team. Uh, even though I didn't play a lot. So it was, it was, it was like, I guess warming in the heart that like, it meant that like I meant that much to people like being on the team and they've, I've heard them tell me a lot like, dude, we miss you, like your energy is, just miss that. And so it's good to hear. But yeah, it wasn't as hard as the last game. Uh, just like when it all hit me, it was a lot easier to go. It's still sucked and like I hated that cause I did feel like I was just like letting them down. You almost felt like I have another year. Like you don't have to be that guy that just quits, like you're quitting. Cause like a lot of people quit cause the game was too hard for him or like it was too hard on them and they just couldn't handle it. But I felt like I was handling it, it was just like more future. There was, there was more to my future than baseball and so I just had to give it up early. But I feel like people don't see it like that. They just think you just quit on your team. And so I know that's been hard because some people have like told me that like I just don't want that image on me as much as like I did it for not myself, but for my family and others. I hope people see it as the way it was meant rather than judging or me taking the easy way.

- Greg: [12:56](#) You've definitely had some adversity through your student athlete career. So what advice would you give to another student athlete who's feeling kind of lost with themselves?
- Henry: [13:13](#) Uh, talk to people. Definitely. I think it's hard to talk to people and talking to Coach Finn was definitely my biggest help. And Justin Yeager as well. We talked about this like how we meet our junior year. We talked to him all the time. Like even if it's just talking about your life and how you're doing that day, like you need to like let out; I'm a very open person now about everything because when adversity does hit and you try and bottle everything up, whatever's going on like you do just need someone there to like, you just need to just tell someone and they can help you because people have been through, they've been through it as well. And so I would just recommend to people tell them like just say it to someone and like know that there's an end to it. Like, even though it may not go as well as like my career didn't go as well as I want. I went through a lot of adversity. I loved it. Like it's not like I hated the, I hate the game because of it. I loved every minute of it and in the end it made me a better person. You just have to like, you can't let it eat you up. And I did sometimes cause I didn't tell people

and I, and just learning how to like, ask people how to wash things. Like get rid of it out of your head. Like when you get like, you pitch bad, you play bad, uh, just talk to someone if they can help you, like get that mental aspect out of it. That helped me a ton more than anything. Fight through like adversity.

Greg: [14:37](#) Awesome. Um, would you say there are resources on campus or did you know of any resources that you could use if say you didn't want to talk to somebody within the team about it?

Henry: [14:50](#) Uh, yeah, I, I know like we do do some stuff at the students center. They do a lot of like psychology, stuff like that. You're like, you're allowed to just get like counseling. I do know that.

Audio File: 005_191006

Henry: [00:00](#) And then never went. I would almost more rather hold it in myself. I don't know why. And I think, and that's the problem. I think a lot of athletes are like that where they like to hold it in more so than telling those people. But I think there's a lot of people in this administration that are, are way more helpful than you think, even if it's your academic advisor and stuff like that, that just help a lot. Uh,

I mean I, I would just randomly talk to some people like that had just nothing to do with the sport. And I think just any rant, like anyone of your friends, like they're more helpful than you think. Uh, and so I think there are resources on this campus that you may not know. Like, even if it's just a teacher, like just the professor, like your academic advisor, like anyone's willing to like help. You just may not, they don't have that title technically to help you, but a lot of people are more willing to help than you think here on campus.

Greg:

00:58

Cool. Alright, um, so I have a statement for you. It goes, basically I want you to say is, you know, my name is Henry Boeckmann and then you say I am a blank, a blank and a blank. So like, and then so like for instance I would say I'm Greg Camillone. I'm a videographer, a traveler, um, and a basketball player or something. And I am more than an athlete Well not basketball cause I want at the end you would say I'm more than athlete. Like you know I'm a photographer, videographer, traveler and I am more than an athlete type thing. Like three things you are besides being an athlete and then ended with I am more than an athlete. Does that make sense?

Henry: [01:41](#) Yeah, no, no I get what you're saying and I'll think about it a little bit.

Greg: [01:44](#) Yeah. Don't feel like you have to do it right away. You know, like some people said that like, you know, I'm a student, I'm a traveler or like, like I interviewed Genesis and she's like, well I'm a cat lover cause she has a cat. It really could be anything.

Henry: [02:11](#) So you want me to say I'm a baseball player first?

Greg: [02:13](#) You would say my name is, my name is Henry Boeckmann..

Henry: [02:16](#) And I'm a baseball player?

Greg: [02:19](#) Sorry. That's my fault. My name is Henry Boeckmann. I'm a blank, blank, blank, and I am more than an athlete. Because people already know you're that. This is kinda like..

Henry: [02:31](#) What is my identity outside of the game?

Greg: [02:35](#) Yes! I'm asking each interview person, person, I interviewed this question and it's going to be like a compilation person saying each thing at the end.

Henry: [03:01](#) Okay, should I say adventurer? Is that a good?

Greg: [03:04](#) You can say that you're a marketing GA. Someone who enjoys to travel.

Henry: [03:07](#) Yeah, I know. I'm going to say I'm a marketer. I feel like an adventure is like a weird, should I just say traveler?
Traveler? Yeah.

Greg: [03:17](#) Yeah. You're heavy into academics, so you can have academia.

Henry: [03:22](#) Academia. Academia. Academia. Yeah. I know.

Greg: [03:26](#) I feel like that's cliché, like obviously he's a student. You know what I mean? It's up to you.

Henry: [03:41](#) Yeah. I'm trying to think of my third one. Should I say God lover or just say religious?

Greg: [05:25](#) You said you're Catholic?

Henry: [05:26](#) Yeah, I'm like, I'm a Catholic. I'm a Jesuit.

Greg: [05:35](#) You can say I'm a die hard St. Louis fan.

Henry: [05:37](#) I'll say that. I'm a 314. My dorm room was 314 my freshman year and it was so hype when I saw that I was like STL born.

Greg: [05:48](#) Camera's rolling. So you can say whenever you're ready.

Henry: [05:51](#) Okay. Uh, I'm Henry Boeckmann. Uh, I'm a marketer. I'm a hiker and I'm a die hard STL native , 314. Uh, and I'm more than an athlete.

Greg: [06:16](#) Alright, cool.

Henry: [06:19](#) Anything else? I'm loving it.

Greg: [06:22](#) Um, basically. So I just ended that, that's all the questions I have for you. But um, I always end it by giving you the floor. If there is anything else that you want to say or something that you've missed, um, you know, I'll leave it to you if you want to make any additional comments.

Henry: [06:37](#) Oh, I think you nailed a lot of questions. I think it's good to see what I think we think. I think it's, it's a nuts experience, college athletics, man. It, it was, I wouldn't trade it for the world, as hard as it was, I don't think. I think it's good to see. I think we do just get, I think people in general just think I am just an athlete. Like what do I do after sports? And I thought that way as well. Like what do I do after baseball like and those long trips, like when we had just super long trips, so like nine hours and stuff. Like we'd just be on a bus. Like I finally started real, I started looking at my life like what do I want to do? Cause you don't even like think about it either. You literally just sit there and like baseball is my life and that's all I'm doing. And like you tell people I'm a baseball player and you don't even think you're, you cannot, you don't even have identity for you like outside of it. So that's all I got to say. I think if you can help people, not saying they shouldn't focus on like their

sport, but just like you are more of something, like you do have an identity, I think it's hard to find cause you have been so athletically driven that I think that was my hardest thing. Like, obviously my positive attitude I had and stuff like that I had, but it was like, what do I actually want to do with my life? You don't know until like you really like look at it. That's all I got, man. I think this was great. I had a great time.

Greg:

08:20

Awesome, thank you so much. I appreciate you doing this.

DREW NOVARA TRANSCRIPT

Audio File: 001_190930

Greg: 00:00 First just start off with your name and where you're from.

Drew: 00:24 My name is Drew Novara. I'm from Murphysboro, Illinois.

Greg: 00:28 And what did you study at SIU.

Drew: 00:32 I studied exercise science during my undergrad and then I switched over to sports studies for my major. I'm sorry for my master's. Redo. At SIU I majored in exercise science for my undergrad and then I switched over to sports studies for my masters.

Greg: 00:49 What made you decide that?

Drew: 00:52 I honestly I got to my senior year and kind of hit the panic button a little bit. I thought I was going to go into maybe physical therapy or going to be a physician's assistant. And honestly like hit senior year and I think I really want to do that anymore and my dad is an athletic director at a high school. And so being around that growing up around that that environment has always excited me and it's been something I've always been passionate about and a friend of mine went into the sports studies program and really enjoyed his first year and I was kind of you know I was rooming with him at the time and so I got to learn a lot

just from watching him and I was like You know what this is something I think I could really really get into. And those two years went by like a breeze I really enjoyed all the classes and everything. So it's been it's been awesome.

Greg: [01:41](#) Well kind of like a two tier question going, off that what scared you about the previous major? And then kind of talk about the influence that your dad had being an athletic director.

Drew: [01:52](#) Yeah. I think the biggest thing that scared me was I remember I was in a golf tournament down in Georgia and I got to talking to a kid who's like you know as we're golfing you know you're with each other for four to five hours of the day and sometimes are closer to like 10 hours if it's two rounds in one day. And so you kind of just start talking pretty much icebreakers like Hey man what year school are you like. What's your major? And as he got to talking and we're both like we were we were both exercise science both start talking about you know school and he's like you know how many like job shadowing hours have you done. And I was like. Zero zero hard zero. And he was like oh that's OK. You still got time. He said I'm only like a couple thousand or something. I think it will be good. I'm

like, yeah. So then as I started to, I'm kind of glad that conversation happened because that night I went to the hotel room and I was like, what are the requirements for a school. It's something I had even looked into. And so, experience hours and test, testing scores for some tests that I hadn't signed up for hadn't taken. And I was like... Oh so that's about whenever I get a kind of like hit me I was like I mean I could still do it if I started like right now and if I did I mean I would I'd still have to go probably like another year of schooling or have to take a year off to get ready for exams and just with the way that the dates worked for the exam so I'm kind of scared me. Like I said hit the panic button there for a little bit and I was like you know what I think there's something that I could that I could do now that I would actually be a little bit more passionate about as I started to kind of look into it a little bit more. That's, that's kind of how that worked, it was a happy accident for sure.

Greg:

03:45

So you're researching about being a physician. Why do you think it was that you didn't know kind of like what the requirements were to do that? Was it like, did you have an adviser or anything like with golf. Was it too time consuming for you to do both?

Drew:

04:04

I think it was probably because I chose that major to start off. I experienced a few injuries in middle school that eventually led me to golf and through my experience of different hospitals and rehabilitation with those injuries. I decided you know I made that my choice of like I want to go into medicine and there's basically only all that experience I really had no other experience and in medicine or in any kind of other rehab facility other than that. And so once I came to school I was just like No I don't do pre-med but maybe something a little bit easier. So I went exercise science. I was like I could be a physician's assistant. As I'm pretty much the whole four years, my main goal was to go play golf professionally. So I really you know I got pretty close to straight A's I think my my GPA was like a 3.8 I think so I got, continue to get good grades but I was never really on the driving force for why I was here, I really wanted to go play professional golf. And then as I started to see that kind of come to the end come to an end and as I started to kind of look into a school kind of started to like have a little freak out and really be like what do I actually want to do like with my life. And that's kind of where you know the silver lining happened like that's where I kind of

found you know I was like, you know I don't think I just want to just go into sports administration and just be around sports and try to help other athletes who may be in my position. I'm sure if it happened to me I feel like there's probably another senior out there that's going to hit the hit the panic button heading into senior year hopefully hopefully they realize a little bit sooner but any anytime you change in a major or changing a career path for your future can be very scary. So if if I can help anyone that's in that position or you know different things come up every single day if I can find a way to help other student athletes in any way that's you know it's rewarding for me.

Greg: [06:05](#) You're right. This is what the documentary is about, that moment. A lot of people think they're going pro or just you know sometimes they get injured and career ends before they realize it. So could you kind of talk about that experience, that little freak out moment you mentioned?

Drew: [06:33](#) Yeah it was, thankfully I had a longtime girlfriend at the time who I'm currently engaged to who she has always been someone that I've, you know we've always seen a future together so we've always talked to each other about, hey this is kind of what I'm going through or this is kind of

what I'm thinking at this time. What do you think? And she said honestly I'm kind of glad that you said this, I never really did see you going into medicine. She lives out in the country and she always cracks up because anytime I get like dirt on my hands or anything like I'm the first one to run to the bathroom like hurry up and just scrub it with soap for as long as I have to until I get it all off, she's like you're kind of a germ o phobe. Sort of and sometimes, I'm not like over the top like Howie Mandel or anything but, her, she was just like I don't really see you you know like I'm OK like looking at blood and stuff like that. She's like I don't really see you getting like down and dirty with somebodies injuries and just being ok with that. And I was like What do you think about, I was like, you know there's this sports studies program that Johnny my my best friend and roommate was going through and she's like honestly I think you'd , I think you'd be perfect for it. You love sports, you know you help your dad out all the time at high school like there's something you've always been around and she's like I'd support you a hundred percent. Like if that's what you want to do so you know my freak out went a little bit easier than I'm sure most do and I give her the credit for

that. But but yeah it was definitely still a scary moment.

Just not really feeling completely lost but really just having your mind just wander you know like a million miles just like what do I want to do. And to, to finally you know kind of have those options there was, was it was really nice for me.

Greg: [08:18](#) Would you say it was the fact that you were able to just voice it and have someone understand to be on your side?

Drew: [08:24](#) Yeah absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah. And I think that's a good part about you know now that I'm on staff here at SIU, we have a lot of really good academic advisors. You know the SIU Health Center over near, attached to the rec. They've got you know counselors. I mean there's so many resources here on campus. I think one big thing that we need to do is try to push that out and let students and student athletes know that they're not alone. There are a lot of options and a lot of people have been going through the same thing that you're going through and only just just want to help.

Greg: [08:59](#) Tell me about those injuries you had.

Drew: [09:04](#) Yes, so I grew up, my dad was a baseball and basketball coach and so baseball basketball were pretty much my, that was pretty much my childhood. Even in the summers it was

waking up at the crack of dawn. I couldn't wait to go try to rally up some people together and go play like tennis, like tennis ball baseball just because you couldn't really get a huge number of kids together. And so we'd play like, like every once in awhile we could get like a game of like five on five or six on six. Use the tennis ball cause if you can kind of play it a little bit like kickball, throw a tennis ball somebody hit them when they're off the base like they're out we pretty much lived for that for years growing up. And seventh grade I was on the eighth grade baseball team playing up because I just like I said I played baseball for my whole life so I felt like I was relatively advanced.

Around that age group. I knew how to field ground balls, I didn't make that many errors so I was playing up and we were in Sparta Illinois playing a game and I'm playing second base the runner at first takes off so I start heading towards second base. As I'm doing that, there's a hit and run, the batter hits a ground ball to me like could have been more perfect right at me I caught it in stride, I kept going with run at first having that jump, that jump start. We got to second base at the same time so when I stepped on the base his sliding foot coming over the top just completely went

straight in my foot. My cleats were stuck in the base and something had to give and that was my ankle that turned it about at 90 degree. Not super pretty. And so I've been spiked before which is just basically where I mean somebody's cleats kind of come out and just cut you because you use metal cleats at that age. And honestly there's a little bit of pain. So I was like man, like I think I just got spiked, and I looked down and my foot is like crooked, like my spikes were looking back at me and I was like, well, that's not supposed to look like that. And so I kind of just, I just went into just like full panic mode, just in seventh grade, just like laying there just crying, just it's like oh my gosh. My foot is not looking great. And so went through like that, had a couple of surgeries on that and get like screws in. And so that obviously wasn't great. Middle School baseball in Illinois, you play that in the fall. So I missed all of basketball season which, which hurt because that's my rehab process, I mean I was on crutches through most the season and then finally got to rehab it a little bit in the spring and then so by, you fast forward to the next year, I made it through baseball season without any injuries. Made it through basketball season but to try to make up for

the lost basketball season that I had in seventh grade I decided to play AAU basketball here in Carbondale and to try to get ready for high school basketball guys you're making that transition from middle school to high school. I gotta step it up. So I was playing AAU basketball, made the team and we were at one of our practices and running a drill and I jumped up to block a shot and the team was standing on the baseline and I came down on a kid's foot with my other ankle and like it was like an E version break. So like my foot kinda went like outwards, not as gruesome as the first one but good enough for like a clean break and also needed surgery. So I'm, sitting there, basically in a cast through like the summer.

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Drew: [00:00](#)

Going into high school and I'm just kind of sitting there like, this is awesome. I definitely behind the eight ball now and I always wanted to play three sports in high school. I just kind of wanted, I feel like going through middle school I always wanted that label of, oh that guy's an athlete. That guy's a three sport athlete like dang. I always wanted that on my resume and wanted to be identified as that. And so as I was looking for a fall sport, because in high school it

switches up, baseball's in the spring, basketball's in the winter. I knew I was going to continue to play those two and so I was looking for a fall sport, figured basketball is probably. I'm sorry football is probably out for me at this point, two ankle injuries in two years, I'm just going to go and just cut my losses; I'm also not a huge guy. So football is not going to be my sport. Running is an absolute punishment for me. I don't enjoy it even a little bit. So I was like cross country you're out. And so I had, I had golfed a little bit as a kid, like my dad took me to a par 3 course in Johnson City and it was just something like we, he had golfed a little bit. And I mean if he was watching me like my mom's you know visiting family or if she was just out of town for whatever reasons, just me and Dad for the day. Okay let's, let's head over and go play some golf. I did that a handful of times and so I'm somewhat familiar with the game I've watched it always been a Tiger Woods fan so I was just like let's, let's give this golf thing a shot. And from there I just kind of fell in love with it and really never looked back.

Greg:

[01:30](#)

We're going to stay on that for a little bit. What do you think it was that made you want to be known as the athlete?

Drew:

01:38

That's a good question. I think with my dad being, you know, he he's always been a coach for me for as long as I can remember. And then when we moved to Murphysboro, I was in second grade and he became the athletic director. So from second grade on I've been around, you know, high school sports like all my life, just watching high schoolers grow up and talking to my dad about certain guys like, oh man this guy was really good at basketball. And my dad would be like yeah but all he does is get in trouble at school. That's all this kid does and I'm like oh maybe I don't want to be like that guy. Or, oh, this guy's awesome. Then one guy that I know in particular is a guy named Jesse Barge. He works at Northwest Mutual now but he was a guy who, as I was growing up, I was like, man I wanna be like Jesse, like this guy's awesome. And my dad was like, Jesse's an awesome guy. Like he gets good grades. He like, he doesn't skip class. He doesn't get in trouble, he plays sports. And I don't know, I think, I don't know if it was a societal thing where, I mean, I always knew like, I always identify myself as an athlete, like I'm an athlete. And I think something as an athlete that you do as you continue to challenge yourself and you kind of push yourself to the

limits to see you, just you know, do you even have a breaking point and you kind of feel invincible and you want to, you know, just kind of go go go and do as much as you can. And so as I'm sitting there you know, I'm going to be playing basketball, I'm going to be playing baseball. I don't want to just take the entire fall off. I got to be doing something to kind of , to continue to have that as my personality and keep that you know as something that I can identify with. And you know being able to say you're a three sport athlete, it always sounds good in conversations. And I think it does look good on resume or if you're in an interview and yeah, I was a three, three sport athlete in high school and I was able to play my favorite one. Once I got to go to college and got a scholarship and I think a lot of that stuff sounds really nice. And I think you can learn a lot about yourself in that process of you know, you really have to, really got to learn how to budget your time, you know you rarely have days off which is a lot like the real world. I'm finding out like you don't have summers off anymore, so really got to you know you have to kind of be used to that. I feel like, you know like working hard and doing what you can to contribute to society.

Greg: [04:01](#) You talked about how you want to be a three sport athlete because it looks good. It kind of sounded like for the fact of impressing others. But for you internally, what was it?

Drew: [04:13](#) Yeah I think, it definitely started off like, I've always been that, not really superficial, but I always kind of basically did it at first of just like this is how, this is how I want to be known in high school. Like watching movies or whatever, I was like I want to be like, you know get to the cafeteria and you've got all the cliques. i want to be sitting with like my friends, like I want to be associated with all of the athletes. And also just sports is something that, I mean my dad and I've always watched growing up. I've always wanted to be like Mark McGuire or Fernando Vina and like a lot of the Cardinals baseball players or Vince Carter or Michael Jordan, like any of the North Carolina basketball players at that point. And, then eventually, Tiger Woods at golf. Not there yet. We'll see. But it's just something I've always, you know, those were my role models. Those are the people that I looked up to. My dad was an athlete in high school and college. I think he broke, I think he set at his time, he may have set some state records as a quarterback in high school. He set some school records, maybe not state. He set some

school records in high school was like an all conference football player. He also played baseball and basketball along with football. So he was a three sport athlete. And with him kind of being my best friend and, really he was probably, not probably he definitely has been my biggest role model through my life so far. You know wanting to follow in his footsteps and be a three sport athlete but then also kind of having that competitive edge of like I want to do what you did. But I want to try to do it better, and really just trying to go along with that has always been something that's kind of helped drive me.

- Greg: [05:55](#) Would you say he was like your main support growing?
- Drew: [05:59](#) Definitely. Yeah. And he was, he's my biggest fan and my biggest critic all at the same time. Like, like any good coach. He was, he was never afraid and still was never afraid to tell me when, when I can improve on something. I'm trying to think, probably my best, best couple memories of him as my biggest critic was, he was, just me him and my sister at a batting cage one time. My sister basically just followed us around, but in the summer, my mom was working, with my dad being a high school administrator, he gets the summers off. And so we're at a batting cage and

I'm trying to hit. He's trying to teach me how to switch hit. So I'm trying to hit left handed with an oversized bat, so I'm swinging a bat that's heavier than any kid my age is going to be swinging anyway. And I finally, I mean, I just struggled. It's like, trying to swing left handed was hard enough, but trying to do it with an oversized bat was, was crazy. And I think I ended up throwing the bat in the cage and I got mad and I was like dang it, like I'm not getting this. And he was like well try it again. I was like I just want to swing one right handed. Soon as I back talked right there it's game over. We packed up all the balls and he's like we're done. So we start leaving. He's like Emily you can hop up and in the front seat. And I was like, back, back door was locked. He's like no. He said quitters don't get in my car. You can walk home. So I was like, I mean, I'm in like fourth grade and I had to walk. I'm trying to think it's really not that far now I'm looking back at, it it's probably you know three or four blocks from my house. But at the time, I'm just walking in fourth grade just by myself and just thinking like, dang, really screwed this up. And then fast forward a couple years. He was my sixth grade basketball coach. And again, he's trying to, trying to teach

me how to guard a kid. And I got a little too close and bumped him. And he called a foul on me again because he's just hard on me. He was like, nope, that's a foul. I was like I didn't even I touch him. And then he said, call your mom, you're done. And so my dad straight up kicked me out of my sixth grade basketball practice. Done. Said just get out of the gym, we don't want you here. And I was like, wow. So I had to call my mom and explain to her that I just got kicked out of practice. And then I had a one game suspension as well. I didn't get to play the next game. But yeah. It's some good times. At the same time, he's the first one they're celebrating with me, if I went you know, if I went three for three or had game winning hit. Hit a buzzer beater shot, won gold medalist or something in high school. He's there with me every step of the way. And again, like I said, biggest role model, best friend, biggest fan and definitely biggest critic for sure.

Greg: [08:41](#) Was there any sort of peer pressure to play sports because of him?

Drew: [08:49](#) I'd say not directly. Maybe, maybe subconsciously a little bit. It's never really been something where I was just like, where I've told myself, like I'm doing this because my dad

was an athlete. It was more of, you know, I could see, you know, I played sports because I wanted to and because that's something that not everyone that I knew that, anyone who I've known looked up to has been some kind of an athlete. And I think that was more where I was, where my passion, where my drive came from was, you know trying to reach that level of excellence that so many others have, have done. And but yeah, I mean being in a sporting environment, I mean he and I mean anything that was on the TV, it was some kind of sports related to, whether it's North Carolina basketball, Dallas Cowboy football, or Cardinals baseball. And as of ,I've recently became a Blues hockey fan, which I think 2014, like my sophomore year of college is when I started following hockey. But just, we just, that's something we've always bonded over just, watched sports, going to sporting events and so yeah. That's definitely have had a big impact on me for sure.

Greg: [10:08](#) What would you say are some of your hobbies?

Drew: [10:12](#) Some of my hobbies, like I said, I'm, I'm engaged so I think probably just the easiest one is just hanging out with her. I really like spending time with Katie, my fiancée. We do, I don't know, we like outdoor activities. Like I said, she's

from the country, so running around with dogs out at her parent's house or riding ATVs is always fun. I like to, like to exercise, work out a little bit and, golf obviously is one of those sports that you can kind of play until you, until your body just won't physically let you. So I still like golfing every once in a while as well.

- Greg: [10:49](#) I heard you work out with that kid, Greg, every once in awhile.
- Drew: [10:52](#) Yeah every once in awhile me and Greg will get in there, pump some iron. Get jacked. No big deal.
- Greg: [10:56](#) I heard Brad was like not about though.
- Drew: [10:58](#) Can the camera see that? Yeah, Greg, Brad is big enough. He's a Carbondale Terrier like those guys are just, they're just, they're sneaky strong like, oh. They're just absolute athletes. Steroids, they're cheating over there.
- Greg: [11:15](#) Haha, um, what would you say is your favorite thing to do?
- Drew: [11:23](#) Favorite thing to do. Well I'll just go with this just cause it's in the fall. I'll probably sound lazy, but probably one of my favorite things to do is go over to my parent's house on a Sunday afternoon and watch the Dallas Cowboys. Watch them struggle, pretty much the whole game, but then hopefully beat an opponent while eating down some chili

mac. It's kind of like the go to. That's like when fall is here, it's like yes, it's Cowboy football on the couch with a blanket watching, watching the game, eat some chili mac. And so that's my favorite. It'll change like in the winter and in the spring.

Greg: [12:28](#) This is kind of more so the audience can just hear it out loud. We all know it. Just kind of give a statement of the sport you were an athlete for at SIU.

Drew: [12:48](#) Absolutely. Yeah. Coming out of high school I was fortunate enough to receive a scholarship to play golf at SIU. I had a full ride offer over at John A Logan. I had a walk on offer at Cincinnati and then I had a thirty five percent scholarship opportunity to come to SIU and play golf. So I did that. Played golf here for four years, was on a four year letterman. Played quite a bit my freshman year. And then after that I played every single event except for one my senior year after that and I was part of our very first Missouri Valley Conference championship team in 2016. Yeah. And that was our very first conference title. I was a part of that as a senior. I give all the credits on that one to my teammates because they really carried me. And but that was, you know, I've had a great time here at SIU. To be a

four sport athlete. I'm sorry, a four year athlete and then to stay on as a, as a graduate assistant after that was, it's been, you know, it's been an awesome past decade or so of my life.

Greg: [13:59](#)

Ultimately, why did you choose SIU?

Drew: [14:04](#)

Ultimately I chose SIU, honestly because of the head coach at Cincinnati. He, you know, he had a son who is a few years older than me. So he had just gone through the recruitment process and I kind of told him my situation, I was like you know I've got a full ride offer at a junior college, I've got a small offer at a smaller division one school, but what would I have to do to come here? And he said, well I'll tell you the same thing I told my son. He said it's the most easy basic thing ever, he said just make a t-chart of pros on one side and cons of another of every single school that you're at. He said honestly once you, once you lay all that out you're going to know exactly where you want to go. And he said, honestly he said I can't offer you what SIU is offering you just because we don't have it in the budget. If you want to come walk on here, we'd love to have you. But he said, if I had a division one offer on the table he said I.

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Drew: 00:00 what I would do and so, he wasn't, you know, he didn't tell me you don't come here. But, as soon as I started to list things, pros and cons, and I kind of kept that in back when mine as well. I mean, it was, it was clear, you know, I'm close to home. Get to, I came on an official visit here as well. I met two of the seniors, two of the getting ready to be seniors. They were juniors at the time. And so I really hit it off with them. One of them, Jake Erickson, who his name's all over the record books for Salukis men's golf. He's tearing it up right now as a as an amateur golfer and in the state. He's played in a few national events as well. And chatting with him on my visit, I was like, you know, this is a, this is a pretty genuine pretty cool dude. And I had, just had a really good vibe from, from them, you know growing up in the area, I know that this entire region supports the Salukis, everybody supports this university. And you know I really, as I continued to sit there and look down at it, you know, I want to be a part of that. I want to be a Saluki, and that's ultimately, ultimately what drove my, drove my decision. I'm honestly really glad with the decision and I wouldn't be where I am if I didn't.

- Greg: [01:15](#) Back to high school you talked about your injuries. And what kind of influence did you have to make you continue to pursue golf?
- Drew: [01:28](#) You know like I said I'm in the summer going into my freshman year, I was pretty much laid up in a cast for most of it due to some previous injuries in middle school and then, I don't really get my first set of clubs until I want to say it was like late July, early August. So I had about a month or so before my freshman year started and before, you know, on my freshman golf year started so I just kind of, just went into it, just kind of, I'm just, hoping, hoping I'd be like halfway decent. Hoping I wouldn't, wouldn't whip it and it turned out that you know compared to some of my peers, I wasn't that bad and I was able to make the varsity team my freshman year. I don't remember if I ever medaled. I don't think I ever like medaled. So like. If you medal in an event it's like you had the lowest score out of everybody. But I got pretty close quite a few times and I had some some pretty good results also. You know, like, I may not be too terrible at this and my high school coach was like, I think you need to like, over the winter you need to go get like some lessons. OK. So I went down to

Paducah and they have an indoor hitting shed where they put you on cameras and you can hit, there's a heater there. Keep it warm in the winter months which is nice. And my swing coach down there, Nick Mills, you know, kind of really taught me how to, how to swing the golf club a little, like properly and how to actually play the game. And that's about where I started to kind of fall in love with it, is starting to see a lot of progress. I was like OK, so if I do this like a ball is going way straighter and way farther, love this. And so as I continue to do that ,you know, just from, from lessons through that winter, I think I dropped my scoring average up through nine holes from probably like a forty four or forty five my freshman year, down to thirty nine my sophomore year. And that, after my sophomore year, I was awarded all south, all south honors and for pretty much our whole region. And that's probably about when I was like, you know what, I think I'm really starting to like this thing. Let's see how good we can get.

Greg: [03:39](#) So when did you know you were good?

Drew: [03:43](#) I'd say, say that's about that's about it. I don't think I've, I've, I take back what I said earlier, my dad's always been a big critic. I think I'm, I'm my biggest critic and so I don't

know if I've ever been like, bro like, you made it or you're good. But I've I've always known that, you know, just looking at other scores and stuff and like I've got a knack for this, like I can, I know I can do this, at least I'm better than that kid or two or whatever and I have kind of been able to said to judge myself based on you know some of my peers and just try to gauge myself on that. But it's really been, you know, I don't think I've ever been like this is it, like this is the peak. It's always been, especially with golf, it's always been trying to be better than I was yesterday and be better than, than the day before that and continue to keep building and just find a way to continue to grow and learn, and you know learning your own tendencies learn what you know learn how you know certain grades of elevation affect your golf ball, you know an uphill life is going to make you know, if the ball is above your feet and the ball is going to start to fall over to the left and just kind of learning you know, it's really physics but a little bit of just kind of my own tendencies on the golf course and just learn a lot about myself has been been something I've always continued to strive for. And that can be carried over into life too. Just knowing your daily tendencies.

Greg: 05:12 Let's move on to your actual experience here now. Just talk to me about your experience as a student athlete. Kind of like the work load. Was it stressful, ever mentally exhausting?

Drew: 05:28 Yeah it was. It was constantly stressful. But as you know as an athlete I think that's something that you're used to. I think the most stressed I ever was was my freshman year just kind of like the first couple of weeks of being here. I think that's something that since I've come on full time I've tried to do as good of a job as I can of just trying to help you know remember how I felt as a freshman and try to help other freshmen kind of start to make that transition into their college life it's like it's the first time you out on your own trying to get enough sleep is a pain in itself. And then from there you know you've got. You're setting up you know your Saluki email your dawg tag you've got all of this stuff that has to get set in place for you to, you know, continue to for it to be easier for you as you go on. You know, obviously everything you do here at SIU you've got, you've got to log in with your dawg tag so doing stuff like that, finding out where all of your classes and buildings are and then trying to pair up all of your class times with your

practice schedule, your workout schedule and study table hours and also try to figure out like, oh also before 7:00 I need to get over to the dining hall so that I don't starve tonight, like it's there's a lot to it. And so that first you know the first week, first couple weeks it was like really just kind of just really trying to just gather and just let everything just kind of soak in and it seemed like any time I finally started to get something like I'm like OK I think we got it. Then you get an e-mail and it was like, hey there's an event going on that is mandatory for student athletes and, and, they're like, well I was going to be doing all this other stuff. So now so I've got to go to this like and I was really really bad at using a calendar. I was like OK I'll remember that. And that's about probably what stressed me out the most. So that's, that's something that I've gotten much better about is using the calendar. I still way too many times, like I even came to work today and I'm just like, I feel like there's something that I'm supposed to be doing and I've got a meeting in Marion here in like an hour and a half, like of course there's something I need to do. Didn't have it on any of my calendars because I was just like, oh I'll remember that. So it's something I constantly struggle with but I'm

trying to get better at. But yeah as far as other struggles as an athlete there is you know every semester trying to trying to adjust to your new class schedule and also all of your teammates class schedules because that's you know, if people had afternoon classes you, you guys are going to be out at practice and are they weren't going to be at practice and maybe you could or maybe you would have to kind of go with them to another practice session so that they can continue to get better as well. I think overall I didn't think it was too bad. There's just I think you, you kind of just roll with the punches you learn from your mistakes and try to, try to make those, try not to make the same mistakes too many times. And I definitely did there's way too many times I forgot that the dining hall closed at 7:00. OK. So it's like 7:30 we'll get to the dining hall, and they're like dude, that thing's been closed for 30 minutes. Nice. Looks like we're going to BWW again tonight I guess or whatever so and then, and then there's that as well as his finances as well as another, another thing to throw in there and you know, I saw like a, I saw a tweet my freshman year that I don't think has ever been, no truer words have been spoken than this thing was like, oh you're a student athlete and it

listed three things; it said a social life, academics and your athletics, like your athletic success is like, there's three of these things you get to choose to. So basically, you can either choose being good at grades and good at sports, or you can be good with friends and go out all the time and be good at sports, but your academic, you going to fall off. It's like you could seriously choose two out of those three things to be good at. And thankfully I chose athletics and academics but there's a lot of times where that, you know, having a social life is constantly gnawing at you, like man like I've only got four years here like let's go out and every once in awhile you make that decision you go hang out with friends and then you had an exam the next day and you got to suffer those consequences so that's that's always something too, is trying to weigh the risks and rewards in life as well just like there's a consequence to every decision I make. And you know, trying to just learn about yourself, learn about yourself, learn from you know, your decisions, your choices and those consequences as well as some pretty important values that I think student being a student athlete taught me.

Greg:

09:58

Want to take a little break and get some water?

- Drew: [10:00](#) I do need to get a little bit of water real quick voice, was fading there.
- Greg: [10:34](#) Alright. You mentioned you try to help incoming freshmen. Is that part of your job? How do you do that? Why do you do it?
- Drew: [10:46](#) Yeah I think I would, I would like to help freshmen a little bit more than what I currently do just because I feel like as far as everyone else that's on staff I'm one of the you know myself, Brad, we don't have a ton of younger people in and an administrative professional role. And so I feel like I'm a little more apt to be able to identify with them and kind of relate to what they're going through. I think as you continue to get older you kind of forget those feelings and forget what kind of, what kids are going through and you know that's something I would like to do but currently I'm the S club coordinator. So that is our letter winners club and I currently try to work with alumni and keep them engaged with our university, keep them engaged with our student athletes and try to keep them coming back and feeling special because being a student athlete here is and was important and that's something that shouldn't be taken lightly and I think, you know, you should have a lot of

pride in being a student athlete here and knowing that there are resources and people available for you. But being a Saluki alumni and being a student athlete alumni knowing that there are resources available and people that still care about you and once you do come back and still have that Saluki pride and try to keep you engaged and have those relationships and network with them is something that I'm currently overseeing and actually really enjoying.

Greg: [12:40](#) When you were getting recruited, Cincinnati, John A. Logan, here, what did that attention I feel like? What did it feel like to get recruited?

Drew: [12:47](#) Honestly probably one of the best, I'm trying to think, I say the best feeling getting recruited is whenever you would, you know, you'd just be playing around or something, be playing at a tournament and then you see a college coach, you don't really know that they're a college coach, but you can just kind of tell because they're just decked out in all of their team stuff and,, you're like oh yeah there's the Illinois State coach I guess, I've never actually seen the guy but that looks about like what a coach would look like. And just kind of just, you know looking around, and just being like, wow, like this is kind of cool like that's whatever, it's

kind of surreal where you're just like, like this is kind of something I've dreamt about, like I wanted to, I wanted to be recruited and go to, go to a school and like now it's happening, like there's a school right there watching me. Trying to think I really didn't have a ton. Cincinnati never really came to actually physically watch me. I don't know that John A. did either. But the coach at the time, Leroy Newton, he was the head coach at SIU, you know, was playing in a golf tournament over at Dalhousie and I happened to look behind me and there's this, you know, this older gentleman riding in a golf cart and I was like that, he's got an SIU pull over and an SIU hat on and somebody was like, oh yeah that's, that's the SIU coach and I was like, have you been talking to him and guys like, no I haven't, I asked the other guys like, you been talking to SIU, and he was like no, and I was like, interesting. I think I'm the only local kid here and the dude's following the group so let's see. And I remember at Dalhousie, whole eleven is a par three, and I was playing well at the, at the time and I think I hit one on this par three, hit a shot to probably about a foot or maybe two feet like right in front of SIU coach and went and tapped in for birdie. Like, OK, that had to like, that

had to leave a good taste in his mouth cause I didn't see him after that. I'm hoping he saw that. He's like I've seen all I need to see drives off but I ended up winning that tournament and from there I emailed him a little bit and said hey, like saw that you're out at Dalhousie. Thank you so much for coming to watch me. Just a quick update I ended up winning. I shot scores of I think it was like 73, 73 or, 74, 74,74, something like that.

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- Drew: [00:00](#) A relationship from there and I was fortunate enough to come on an official visit. I get to meet him and some of the players and kind of from there is about where my, where I made my decision and decided I wanted to come here.
- Greg: [00:15](#) What would you say is the satisfaction you get from playing golf? Something about the competition?
- Drew: [00:22](#) Good question. I think. I actually saw this question whenever you sent them to me and I was just like, I had to think about that one for a little bit. Still do. As sad as it is, it's probably more results driven than anything like. Golf such a, it's such a funny game as soon as you are like, OK I think I've got command of this, that's whenever all hell breaks loose and that's when I think it kind of gets real

frustrating. And if you can't, you know, if you can't like self reflect and figure out why, why did the wheels fall off right here, like what happened, what was going on in my head? You know, what really caused you know that entire round to go from being, you know, winning worthy to just being like middle of the pack and just not even being close and trying to figure that out I think is one of the toughest things about golf. That's kept me it kept me up many nights just being like why did I absolutely just blow that round away, like what happened there. And trying to figure that stuff out, it'll absolutely drive me crazy. So I think, you know, the satisfaction in golf really comes from being like, well I think, you know, I was, you know, as soon as this happened, I kind of started to panic a little bit and then from there I made a terrible decision to try to add a hero shot out of some woods and try to get it on the green. I think if I just punch it out, you know looking back on my round, I was chipping really well that day. I think if I punch it out maybe, I hit it on and I make a five at worst. Instead I made an eight or something. Maybe, maybe instead of the five I actually make a long putt and get a four. But just trying to give yourself those chances, so I think the real

satisfaction comes from, you know, getting back out there playing your next round and, you know, once that round actually pays off and you can complete like an entire round of 18 holes and be like, that was, that was a solid performance like, was dialed in. I was prepared. I played as well as I know I can. And to walk off the final green knowing that you put everything into it and that you got everything out of it that you, you should have, I think is one of the most rewarding things that I've only had a handful of rounds like that. Those are the good ones.

Greg: [02:43](#) What would you say though, based off what you just said about thinking about what you did wrong right? For someone who has never played sport, that sport, explain to them how much of a mental game it is.

Drew: [02:58](#) Yeah man it's crazy, like on the mental side of golf, you know, you watch the guys on TV, they make it look very, very easy. Tiger Woods, well not, not recently, when Tiger Woods was at his peak. I mean he made the game look as simple as possible. I mean, it's just like, you know, as soon as they show the camera over to someone else over in the woods, you like, how do you go in the woods, like just hit it straight, like that's not even that hard. But the, the physical

aspects of it, of trying to get a ball to go straight is hard enough. But then to, you know, at least in other sports I think you have more of an outlet of, of your frustrations. You know the referee throws a penalty. Come on man. I didn't even touch that guy, like this ref's out your cheating us. Or an umpire calls a, calls a strike on you. This guy's from their hometown, like this is, this is some B.S. and then you can kind of just brush it off like it's nothing. And then in golf, you really don't have anyone to blame but yourself, like you're like, man this is stupid tree's too big. Well you're not really supposed to be behind that tree like you hit it there. And so trying to deal with those frustrations internally and realize, like I got myself into this situation. I've got to find a way to get myself out of it. You know, I think it's a really good game. It teaches me a lot about life. If you let it and to sit there and just be like you know, like, I'm, you know, I'm in control of my destiny here. I can decide you know, there's a risk reward with every decision that you make. And you know, if you know, if there's a, a water hazard over to the left and you're on a short par five you, I think I can, I can get this up there and try to fly it onto the green and two and, you know, cause obviously in

golf you're trying to make the lowest score possible so sometimes you're looking for every advantage you can get. And before you know, before every shot trying to make a decision of, what's going through my head here, what do I want to do. Do I want to, you know, I'm feeling the wind is pushing, you know from right to left. So the ball is obviously gonna go that way. I want to end this thing a little bit right of the flag and hope that he gets on, I mean just, there's small decisions throughout the entire round where you're constantly thinking and you're constantly thinking you know, what's let's say worst case scenario on the shot, you know, I haven't been hit any good if I miss it like I've been missing it today. If I don't hit a good shot so far today, all my balls have been, you know flying, you know 10 to 20 yards to the right. So maybe I compensate for that a little bit. I still try to hit a good shot right at the flag but if I do miss it a little bit and goes 20 yards right at least I'm still in play. I didn't completely lose my golf ball over and over in the water or over in the out of bounds or in the woods. And, I think just those decisions are just kind of taxing and I think as things start to kind of spiral a little bit out of control you know, you just, you know that 20 hour

mess becomes a 40 yard mess. You're just kind of like, what in the world is going on? And those frustrations continue to build up and then sometimes if you let it, there's just an absolute breaking point where you're just like, this is stupid, I'm done. Like this, you want to quit but you're like I've got seven holes left and I can't. I have to find a way to just stay sane through the rest of this. But yeah it is. It's a very mentally demanding game where I mean as soon as you, you know, if you think you can and think you can't do it especially in golf you're usually right. So if you're like man I think I can pull it, can pull the shot off, if you truly believe that I think nine times out of ten you're going to be you know, even if you don't pull it off absolutely perfectly and be in better shape than you would have been if you're just like I don't really know if I can do this or as soon as you start lacking in confidence you might as well just go and pack it up and call it a day because it's, it's a very penalizing game. And as soon as you get to a point to where you are really focused on your score and you're not like a recreational golfer anymore you're like, you know these, these scores determine how good and, and how bad I am trying to achieve those, those better scores. But yeah

it's very, very mentally demanding game. Just trying to put your best foot forward every single day. Even when you don't have it and try to just grind through everything around and try to put the best scores out there that you can and try to learn a bit, a little bit about yourself in the process is very rewarding as well.

Greg: [08:03](#) Alright, real quick, just on what you were saying, how would you say some of that mental capacity carries over to life outside of sports? It sounds like there is a lot of perseverance involved. So maybe just talk about what you learned from sticking it through to what you do now.

Drew: [08:22](#) I think one of the biggest things that I see, you know translate from golf into the real world is really, I mean, we're all humans, we all have emotions. And I think one of the, you know, some, sometimes it can be our biggest enemy is you know, anger, frustration, and trying to find you know, the best way to deal with that. It's something that I think all sports teach and I think golf may teach it the best because you are constantly you know, you're fighting against yourself the whole time. And so once you get into the real world you know, like myself, like I don't golf quite as much as I did so I feel like the things that I've learned

from golf I'm just straight up applying to my own life now. And so as soon as you have you know, you're putting on an event or something, or you have to deal with an angry patron, let's say they start you know, yelling at you or you're getting you know, you're getting gassed out or yelled at by someone else trying to deal with all that frustration and in a way that doesn't completely just burn bridges and doesn't absolutely trash your entire reputation. It's something that's very, very important I think. And so learning how to deal with those frustrations internally. So I know like, if I get mad, like I'm, I just start doing a little bit a deep breathing or I'm just put it off until later and just deal with it later. Like there's just you know, I've got you know, certain small tricks kind of that I like to keep secret to myself and keep private to myself. You know, I feel like I know my own psychology pretty well and I give the sport of golf the credit for that. You know, I, I, I know how I like to handle certain things and kind of how I go about my business on a day to day on a day to day routine. And so I'm really dealing with those frustrations and, just trying to continue to, to learn, and a lot like I was saying earlier is trying to be better today than I was yesterday and the day

before that and continue to learn. No matter really what it is I don't care if you're a janitor or if you're at Wal-Mart working there or if you are a photographer, videographer trying to find a way to continue to learn improve and grow as a person as some of the most important things I think you can do on a personal development standpoint.

Greg: [10:40](#) This is the time to hype yourself up. Let's talk about some of your achievements.

Drew: [11:02](#) I'd say, on a, from an individual basis, I currently am tied with two other people for the lowest 18 hole score in school history. I shot a bogey free 64 at Austin Pea's Tournament in my junior year of college. And so that's, that's been a crowning achievement of mine, being able to say that I am one of the, you know, I've shot one of the lowest scores in school history has always been something I've been able to hang my hat on. At that same tournament the year before, instead of a sixty four, I shot a sixty seven and along with that I had a teammate of mine, Stephen Socheck also shoot sixty seven. Caleb Harms shot a sixty nine and one of my best friends Ben Payton shot a seventy one I believe; double check the numbers, but it, and it added up to a two seventy three and, as we looked into the record book that

was the lowest team score in school history that still stands today. We've had in the last couple of years we've had some very, very good golfers and some great golf teams come through here ever since our new coach, Justin Fetcho took over. He's really built the golf program here into something that's absolutely spectacular. And to say that, you know, my team my sophomore year still holds a record for lowest team score in school history is something that I'm very proud of. And to say that I was you know, I contributed to that and felt like I led the team and that was something that I was, I was really really proud of. Was part of the first conference title in school history. And got to make our first regional appearance, we went down to Alabama, that's the first time SIU golf has made an NCAA postseason. Again I, give my teammates all the credit for that. My senior year of golf I kind of started a little bit of a burnout phase there towards the end, but the guys you know, we had four other guys that I think I contributed and one of our rounds at conference and the rest of the guys pulled the weight from, from there and they were, they were spectacular. They, I mean they crushed it and then we got to regionals, we didn't have a great result but you know

all of us you know, is a great time as a great experience for everyone so really enjoyed that. And then I think going into playing some summer golf by myself, I qualified for back to back United States amateur golf tournaments. It's the biggest amateur golf tournament in the world. So being able to qualify for it once is awesome. But to go back to back was you know, that was remarkable. It's something I'll never forget. I absolutely loved it. I got to travel up to Boston for the first one and got to go down to Atlanta for the second one and get to play against some of the best amateurs in the world. I was looking back at it a couple months ago, just to read some of the names that were on there and Bryson DeShambo was there. I'm trying to think of some of the other ones. Can't remember, there's a few that started. Bo Hausler is a name that you may not have heard of but he's pretty good golfer as well. There were just a lot of, a lot of really good golfers that I know. I didn't realize at the time but now I've started to see their names pop up, like they're not winning tournaments. Yeah but they're like on leaderboards and I'm watching that and I'm like dang, like I was at the same tournament as those guys. Now they absolutely destroyed me at those

tournaments ,but, at least be in the same company as them and to see you know, I think I had, I was usually able to put together a decent round on one of the first days and to see you know, like that round beat someone else's round was like sweet. I was better than this guy for a little bit like that was, that was, that was pretty cool as well. But those were some of my, some of the highlights that stick out to me.

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- Drew: [00:00](#) For sure.
- Greg: [00:04](#) Elaborate on some of those emotions. You've been a champion. You've been a qualifier, set school records. How does that feel?
- Drew: [00:14](#) Yeah. Whenever you kind of talk about you know, kind of having a high from like what kind of satisfaction you get out of golf, is being able to walk off of the last hole of the day, and then kind of just sit there and you don't really know exactly where you stand. In amateur golf because it's not like you have live leader boards out there like they do on tour, and let's say you know Novara is in first place or whatever, but it's still just kind of having that feeling. It's weird. It's tough to describe but, you can kind of feel like, man the course is playing kind of hard today and I feel like

the score that I shot is, somewhat tough to beat because you know, it wasn't super easy out there. I felt like I played really well to get here. Like maybe I've got a shot at this and then to get up and go look at the scoreboard and see all the results come and start kind of crunching numbers and alright I'm at 135. Is anybody else below that? You kind of keep looking and you're like, wow, like so far I'm in the lead and you're just kind of just sitting there and you really start to kind of get a little too anxious. Maybe trying to hold it down because you really don't want that letdown of somebody else. You know, I shot a one thirty five and somebody else comes in with one thirty four then you're like, come on like, dang this sucks but, yeah it's a, it's a feeling that's very tough to put into words. I really don't have the vocabulary to do that it's just, it's, it's it's unique. It's, it's, it's very, very tough to describe but it's, it's awesome at the same time to you know, to put all of the time and effort it goes, no behind the scenes to for those moments and to see it all pay off at least just for that little bit is you know, it's, it's indescribable and it's absolutely priceless. That's why I think everybody gets into it, gets into sports and why they enjoy it so much.

- Greg: [02:04](#) And would you say there is a lot of warm celebration from the SIU community? Fans, faculty and staff?
- Drew: [02:17](#) Yeah. It was mostly whenever we, say after we we won the conference tournament is about when we started to feel the effects a little bit on campus. Obviously with it being men's golf it's not, it's not a big sport. You know we were a team of like eight guys. And so it's not a baseball at all. And you know we don't, we don't you know, people don't buy tickets to come out and watch golf which I mean you can't. And the college tournaments did not take in advance. You can go out there but we don't really have any home events so if anybody wanted to come watch us they had to fly to California for one. One of the events, drive down to LSU, go out to Ohio State. I mean all of these are pretty, pretty legit drives or even short flights. And you know, to still come back, and I remember I was driving to, it was either, either class or workouts one morning I was just scanning through the radio and the ESPN radio came on and they're like congrats to Southern Illinois Saluki men's golf team for winning the Missouri Valley Conference title for the first time in program history. Justin Fetcho and his team have done a great job. They'll head on to Alabama, and to hear

that and then later go to the viewing party and see the support from the academic and athletic staff. Of everybody there at the at the viewing party. Basically we had golf channel on. You get to watch and see which site you get to go to for your NCAA regional event. And as soon as we saw, you, I mean you see the Southern Illinois pop up there and you see the logo and that's when everything hits you like oh wow like I'm a part of this. Like that's, that's us, like that's, that's awesome. And so yeah that was just, it was awesome for really I don't have any other words for it, it just, it was awesome like it was, it was really cool and it's something I wouldn't trade for, for anything at this point.

- Greg: [06:30](#) How do you measure success?
- Drew: [06:45](#) In golf, or now?
- Greg: [06:48](#) Do both. First as an athlete and if you think how you you measure it has changed with work or life, talk about that transition. Maybe about t your values and priorities.
- Drew: [07:03](#) Yeah I think early on in my athletic career, just am not even going all the way to the beginning but just starting in college, I think I was very results oriented. Basically you kind of, you know, success to me depending on what was the final outcome. Did I win. Did I not. Did I at least in

golf. It wasn't always about winning or losing but you know, did my score reflects how I, how I felt, like I performed. Did I shoot in the upper 70s which is a few over par and I'm like eh, or did I get it closer to par or maybe even a little bit under? And usually if I could shoot around par or below I was usually pretty happy or even just a couple over if it was a tough course. I'd kind of gauge it on that. I'd say as I started to get older and read a little bit more into psychology, what's going to help me be successful. I think as I started to get older I really started to gauge my success more on the things that I could control. You know. I'm sure I may not have played well today but did I do all that I could do to put myself in a spot to be successful. And if so then you know, that's something to at least take away from it. And you know did I learn something about myself today that I didn't know yesterday. And do I know how to correct mistakes? Do I know how to build on the good things? Those are all kinds of things that from there I was able to see if I was successful or not. And I kind of carry that with me into today as a young professional at SIU in the athletics administration you know, did I make you know, our department, did I make

you know, our development group, did I find a way to make us better today? You know the little projects and stuff I was working on, did that make us better? You know, if not that's when you kind of start to feel a little bit depleted sometimes when I, you just like, I was doing some stuff today but I don't really felt like it made really any kind of an impact and I don't think it made you know, I don't think you got us closer to our fundraising goal. I don't think it got us closer to building relationships with people, or I don't think I made any good connections today. Those are the ones that are, that's whenever we kind of go home and Congress is frustrated. Why do I need to do tomorrow so that I don't feel like this or you know how can I be better just somehow some way. Just just one thing and I think for me I found that you know kind of starting small. And I've got a checklist every single day you know, of things that I need to get done ASAP. And I've got other things that are a little more project based and trying to just knock this stuff off my checklist gives me some kind of like a sense of like accomplishment. OK we've got this stuff done. What's something else that I can do and then kind of prepare for the next day and try to continue to just move forward and

drive the needle. But, you know, I think if I can, if I can feel like you know, I think it's more internal for me if I can feel like I got better today than I did yesterday, no matter what it was, it doesn't have to be you know, the event didn't have to be absolutely perfect, but if I was able to you know, put out a fire at an event you know like oh these people weren't on the check in list, but they're here. We got to find them a spot at a table trying to, to problem solve and trying to figure things out on the fly. You know, if I'm able to do that and feel like you know, I've made strides throughout the day you know I'd count that as a win and I'd be kind of how I would measure success in that.

Greg: [11:34](#) With those expectations, are they a product from yourself? How did they come to be? Who influenced them?

Drew: [11:49](#) Today being a like you know, being a twenty five year old young professional, I, I think I'm kind of in control of, of what you know, what I decide is successful and not because I think I know myself relatively well, I know myself better than anyone else does obviously, but I feel like I know myself well enough to know hey man that was definitely not my best effort today. You know I was, sure I had to you know, send out a tweet or something for media purposes

just related my job to try to get the word out there about something. But I definitely didn't need to spend all that time just refreshing my feed and just seeing what was up in the world like when, when I had other tasks at hand. You know there are certain times when it's a little bit slower. And you know, maybe work like, in the summer or I've gotten some other stuff done every once in a while just to kind of taking a step back and taking a breather. OK but, you know sometimes if you're, this I don't know, I just kind of shooting this stuff with somebody down the hall and you got projects and stuff going on that's whenever you just kind of, come on bro. But I think that's, I kind of just you know gauge that myself and try to go home every day just feeling like I've made a difference in, in someone's life and if not you know at least I feel like I put myself in a position to do it tomorrow or the next day or next week, next month. The next event that we've got you know trying to feel like I'm at least putting myself in position and building those, those building blocks to continue to finally you know build it up and get better and I feel like those are the things that I try to, try to gauge and try to judge myself on. It's about being honest with yourself too and reflecting.

- Greg: [13:35](#) What would you say your relationship was like with your coach here?
- Drew: [13:47](#) Oh I had a unique relationship. I had two coaches so I had Leroy Newton for two years and my relationship with him was was very good. I think he's you know, as a person, there's, he's a tremendous, tremendous human being. He's, he's funny you know. Loved being around him when it came to coaching and stuff, he was, he was good but not quite as good as Coach Fetcho. You know being a little bit younger, as I mean this is, this coaching is his passion. Coach Newton had you know, my first coach he, he was a retired principal and he absolutely loved golf and I don't think anybody gets into the school system without loving kids. And so obviously he had a, coach Newton had an absolute passion for that. And so you know the camaraderie that you were able to built with with the guys and with Coach Newton was, was awesome. Fast forward to my last two years on the golf team, Coach Fetcho came in and I mean completely flip the, flip the script, flipped the program upside down 180, whatever you want to call it and it was completely different. And my relationship with him is still good. I still.

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Drew: [00:00](#) I like to call him still. Still chat with him, try to golf with him every once a while. We constantly reminisce about some of our good tournaments. We love digging in for whatever reason, into some of the terrible, terrible things that we did as far as you know, performance wise. Do you remember that shot that I hit at Arkansas State or constantly one that always comes up is I putt the ball off the green one time and it went into a pond. And so we casually just laugh at that and I still blame the people who put the hole there because, it was bull, they put it like right on top of this slope. There is really no way to stop the ball, it was going in the pond, it was destined. And I know that because the kid that hit the putt right after me, I was going to drop my ball and his ball comes rolling down and he hit it in the pond as well. So I was like, yeah I don't think this pin placement on this was fair. But just love like joking with him and it's fun to go back and relive some of those moments with somebody especially someone who had like a coaching perspective you know, he wasn't playing but he's there to make you better and you know he's got a different opinion about certain things that are going on in a

golf round. But you know a coach's perspective and a player's perspective are, are usually different that's why there's you know, that's why the coaches get paid to coach because they've got a different perspective on things and so hearing his perspective about things you know, we just have a usually good time just kind of you know, growing because I still golf to this day every once in a while. It's more recreational now than it is competitive but still whenever I go out there I'm still competing against myself. I feel like so being able to try to learn from past mistakes or past results and you know he's been able to help me a lot with a lot of that. So that's always been really nice to.

Greg: [04:27](#) You mentioned about your relationship with your coaches. Your dad is also a coach in your life. Was there any point where maybe your identity as an athlete was conflicted? Between your dad as a coach compared to what you learned at the collegiate level?

Drew: [04:45](#) Great question. I don't think any of the viewpoints were ever conflicting. I think that was another positive thing about being you know, a three sport athlete for four years of high school playing sports all grown up. You see a lot of different coaching styles. And I was very, very fortunate. I

feel like I had some of the, some of the best coaches in the world if not the world then at least the region. You know my basketball coach in high school, if anybody's ever been to a Murphysboro basketball game, you've seen our coach absolutely lose his mind and getting to play for that guy, growing up watching him, I was terrified. I was like I don't like, I almost hope this guy retires like I don't really want to play for him like it'll be crazy. But if you're one of his players it is one of the coolest things ever, you like, man this guy has absolutely got our back because most of times you know if you feel like you're getting cheated, or you feel like you know you feel like you're getting fouled or are hit or harmed or anything, he's, he's the first one in your corner and ready. He's, he's always watching your back. And so having a coach like that who I mean if you screw up, he's gonna let you know about it. And he's like hey, you absolutely, I mean he'll, I can't say it because I'm on camera but I mean he's going to, he's going to cuss and scream and yell and he's gonna let you know that you screwed up. But that coaching style for whatever reason always, always worked for me because I was like, what are you gonna tell the guy. No you're wrong. Like no obviously I did screw up

because I just I had three turnovers in thirty two seconds, like well how do you how do you refute that. Obviously I was I screwed that up but knowing that, that guys always got your back and some of the life lessons and some of just little things that he would teach me about the game of basketball you know, I've had baseball coaches that were very influential as well. And so I think just having you know, a diverse set of different philosophies different coaching styles and really just different personalities getting to, to understand where they're coming from I think is really important. You know I think that's you know, I think that's always been something I've looked back on and felt very fortunate about that I've had all of those coaches in my life.

Greg: [07:25](#) What parts about golf didn't give you joy?

Drew: [07:27](#) The very easiest thing that stands out is bad weather. I played in snow one time at Ohio State. The first round got absolutely cancelled because it snowed and there was snow on the golf course. And then I think yeah. So that afternoon they're like all the course will be cleared out by the afternoon. Wasn't completely cleared off but I mean, you imagine like snowy temperatures in Ohio like upper Ohio.

It was still cold as could be. That's one round where I didn't even care what I shot because in golf you still have to have a lot of flexibility and there is a huge range of motion with your body that your body has to be able to move whenever you add on so many layers and thick layers of stuff like coat whatever. Like your golf swings gonna be terrible and, that's the first round where I finally told some of the guys I was like I don't know what I'm going to shoot today but I am layered up. I think I had like seven different shirts on. I had like three like long sleeves, my polo vest, and like a maybe even two pull overs or something. And I was just like I'm not, no there's a pullover and then another vest like an outer like rain protective vest so that I wouldn't get wet like it was so, so cold outside and then we got to like a par 5. And I saw the picture of it on my phone because again I, I almost, had I been disqualified from this tournament I wouldn't have been mad because I would've just went and got to sit inside like I was so cold. I hate the cold and I hated that day and I was like nobody's gonna believe this. I took a picture of the golf course on the phone because it started to snow on us and the, you could see it like to where you could see footprints. And so I had a picture of like the

fairway was actually very beautiful but playing and it sucked and I hated it so much and then I had a putt. It was downhill and I didn't get it to the hole because when I hit the putt the ball rolled onto the snow and formed a little bit of a snowball and I, that was, that was probably the best part of my day actually because I started just laughing hysterically, like this is awesome. Made the next putt which was helpful but yeah I absolutely...bad weather, like crazy wind, hard rain and snow. I hate it. I hate it. So that's, that's definitely the worst part about golf. It did not give me any joy at all. I did see a plane land on a golf course once. I do have that picture. There's that one. Oh boy. It like stalled, I'm on like the 17th green and sorry. Pause. Well on the 17th green reading a putt, and while I was reading putt, kid was getting ready to step up to his putt and I just see this plane flying like head high. Like not near us, it's probably like 100 yards away from us and I'm just like, oh like, I couldn't get the words out. I'm like dude stop. Stop. Don't putt yet. And they're just like, two kids are looking at me like, is this kid having a stroke. I couldn't get the words out and was like just look like it's, it's a plane. There is a plane and so like they turn around and sure enough we just

watched this plane just coast and it goes down and just lands in this fairway. It didn't hit anybody. And we're just like what the heck. I mean it was like on, we was down in Georgia. It got on the local news, they were like police motorcycles had to drive out there because they weren't gonna drive like a huge police SUV or police car out there and this dude's engine just stalled as the only place he could land. So they're just like OK. Good spot. There it is. So I mean the scenery is beautiful but, golfing this was, was trash. And then I had, like you can see there are people at the bottom of the hill. I couldn't hit yet because my ball would have gotten to them. And so I had to just stand there in the snow. Thanks guys. This is awesome. Yeah this is just sick. Big fan.

Greg: [12:08](#) All right. So now I'm going to, golf career is wrapping up. Tell me about those emotions.

Drew: [12:21](#) It was kind of bittersweet for me honestly. At this point I'd kind of had, kind of seen the writing on the wall of you know, I never, I've won golf tournaments before individually as an amateur. And I didn't win any time we had like a college event. And so I kind of started to look at that as like, college golf is a little bit different because it's a

different mindset of you're not always just gung ho trying to trying to shoot the best square you can, sometimes you're trying to not screw up because if you can minimize mistakes you know, if I can make bogey here instead of double then I just saved our team a shot. Like if my score is counting. And so sometimes I like, if I'm looking at a and you know let's say a ten to twelve foot par putt instead of being aggressive with it and have a run in that chance of it missing and then missing that next putt because you were a little too firm with a putt and you got four feet coming back in 93 putt or something you've got all those things going through your head. And so sometimes whenever you're in a team aspect I think this was maybe, it's just how I thought. I feel like I think others feel this way but could be wrong. When there's that team aspect you know that part, but sometimes you kind of get just a little bit more conservative with it and you're like, let's hit it a little bit softer, let's make sure that this hole doesn't get you know bad. And I think. Most of times that's whenever you end up missing the putt, you tap it in for bogey and I. Whereas you know if I was just playing my own ball and I didn't really care about anyone else's score maybe I'm sitting there thinking you

know, a little bit more selfishly and thinking a little bit more about me than anyone else and I'm sitting there like you know, what I think a par here would be really really huge. And I think I need to this has to go in like let's do everything I can to make this putt and if I miss it I miss it whatever. And I think some of those times is whenever you really get dialed in and focused and you know if it, if you make it you can really jumpstart your round. But at least you don't have as much fear. I think in those rounds. And so as I like I said as I saw kind of the writing on the wall. I really didn't feel like my golf career was going to skyrocket. And you know I talked to quite a few people who have done that who have played on many tours which is you know, you're not on the PGA, you're not on the web.com tour but you're traveling, playing you know at little smaller events. And I didn't really see myself, I didn't see there being any joy or peace in my life. To you know travel the country make. I didn't really feel.

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Drew:

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Like I didn't want to make that financial commitment of of gas and vehicles, hotels, food. All of that is, it's all on the road. And then on top of that, the entry fee that it takes to

get into golf tournaments. I didn't really want to make that commitment and it wasn't something that I was excited to do. And so the end of my college career was a little bit bittersweet for me as you know, it sucked that it came to an end but I, you know the last semester for me, my spring semester, I didn't really take the winter off. You know, I was I was out grinding in the sheds so I never really did take any downtime to just kind of relax and put the clubs up. I kind of just stayed at it. And so by the time the semester ended you know, you're going through finals, you're going through all this stuff and continuing to try to wrap up your degree and continuing to go out and continue to work as hard as you can on on your craft which for me it was, was golf. I kind of had a little bit of like a burnout period to where I was fortunate enough to work at Kokopelli down over by Marion right after I graduated until I could kind of figure out what I was going to do graduate assistantship wise. And so even working at that golf course I had free range to all the facilities. I could go play golf anytime I wanted for free. And I'm also getting paid just from being in the pro shop obviously. And I can go give lessons and stuff like that, I can head to the range

anytime I wanted to. I had free range at the facilities and even with that as soon as my shift ended I just headed home like, I did not want anything to do with physically playing the game. It's something I've always loved and I always wanted to be around it. But for a good, good two to three weeks of actually working there I didn't even step foot on the golf course I was like no. And some of my co-workers like, hey man we're going to get a money game go and let's go, let's go play with some of these, some of the members and I'm just like, honestly nothing sounds worse. And honestly I gave, I am not excited about that at all. And I honestly, I was still kind of burnt out whenever I finally stepped back into it. Like I said I worked there for probably, it probably was at like two and a half week mark is about whenever I finally got back out there and I was like alright, I was gonna go ahead a few putts and just kind of just slowly kind of work back into it. I was like, start seeing putts roll in, oh that was nice and like whatever. Go ahead a couple of balls on the range and to see the game not completely just crumble from that two and a half week break. I was like oh this is all right. And then kind of getting out there playing with some guys is about where I

kind of started to find the fun in it again and that's, that's kind of where I am today as well as like I've got a lot of peace in my life just playing that game for fun because that's I think what it, what it should be. I think as soon as you start playing it for for money it becomes a whole new, a whole new monster. As soon as you start playing it for a living, now has it worked out for a lot of people.

Absolutely. Ask Tiger Woods, ask Rickie Fowler. Ask Jordan Spieth, Justin Thomas all those guys. Jordan Spieth, Smiley Kaufman and whatever whenever they went on that spring break trip like I was like, that looks fun as can be. So like obviously golf can work out for well but you know given my late start and given I felt like I progressed very far in a short period of time as far as you know golfing goes like it's usually a kind of a lifetime sport like speed and a lot and, Tiger those guys been playing since they were a little. I didn't really get started to high school, so kind of high school to college you know that eight years I felt like I made tremendous strides in my game. But, I feel like I've got a lot more peace now. Kind of step and taken a step back and just playing it more for fun and just going out every once in a while with it.

- Greg: [04:02](#) You talked about your plans, somewhat of pursuing golf with the qualifiers. Talk about your intentions with that. Especially for people who don't understand the process.
- Drew: [04:28](#) I played in, I played some qualifiers as, when I was in high school and college. So basically you go to a qualifier to get into the big event to get into the big tournament. And most of that actually, take it back, about all of that was on my grandparents who have been very supportive and so they were usually the first ones to be like well we'll pay the entry fee for this if you guys can get there. And so I, once I graduated, I wanted to kind of have you know, whether it's a pride thing or it's an ego whatever, I didn't want to have to continue to rely on other people for for my living. And so I think that was the biggest thing for me is I wanted to kind of just make it on my own and through doing that, know, I kind of told myself I was like I don't I don't think this is the route for me. I don't think I want to, to do this and I know my grandparents, my parents would, they would completely support me all the way. But at the same time I found myself, when the pressure of golf kind of starts getting out there and starts to you know, starts to kind of just show its teeth a little bit is about where I would kind of

change a little bit as a person. And I felt like I took a lot of things for granted and got way more self-centered whenever that kind of stuff would happen. So getting away from that atmosphere I think has made me a better person than I think. You know I think if that's something that God told me to do I would be much more apt and much more prepared to deal with, with that stuff. But I know how you know, that competitive environment makes me feel. And you know I don't think that's the person that I want to be. And so again stepping back from that and being able to just play it for fun and play it with friends, play with co-workers, played with you guys a couple times. That's the stuff that I live for and I like, I love it and I wouldn't I wouldn't change my, my decisions for, for anything.

Greg: [06:23](#) Give us a little bit of a time frame like when golf stopped. That point when you knew this wasn't going to be the rest of your life. From competitive to recreational.

Drew: [06:59](#) Yeah I think while I was working at Kokopelli, I did start to play in a couple small professional events. They played a, played at events at Kokopelli with some other pros. Played in a Pro-Am at Benton with some other pros. And I competed with them. But again it was kind of the same

thing like at Kokopelli, I, it was a course that I knew and I didn't play as well as I wanted and I found myself getting way, way too frustrated and not really being able to deal with that as well as what I had wanted. And it was the same, at, at Benton. I had been, I practiced like pretty hard going into that and I played very, very well on the front nine at Benton. It was like the best score that I've shot there. I shot like a thirty one I was five under on the front nine in this pro-am and I was like man this is awesome. And it's a, it's a pretty easy course if you ask most people who are familiar with the game and who continue to play the game quite a bit. And it's only a nine hole course. You play the same nine holes twice just different tee boxes and it's really not a huge difference in the tee boxes so I was coming off shooting that thirty one of my sweet. And there's just, I mean it's, it's a place where I mean there are birdies everywhere. You just have to, all you have to do is just I mean, just let them, let it happen. And so like on the back nine, I think I only shot instead of five under on the, on the front and I only shot one under on the back. And there's, there's two par fours that are like drivable and there are two par fives under drivable like you can get to the par

fives and two shots you can get to the par four in one shot. So like instead of making a par birdie you're looking at an eagle or a birdie. And to not really be able to come through I was just like man like, if I was actually doing this full time for a living like I just cost myself, by, by, you know not having an even just a decent back nine. It was decent, but for not you know, for just having that low for whatever reason you played perfect on the front and to just like absolutely just kind of just stop and mellow out like you probably, like if this was like an actual thing and you just cost yourself hundreds or thousands of dollars depending on what kind of tournament you're in. And so like that's where I continue to kind of just look at it and was like man I don't know. Like I don't know if this is really for me and I had a graduate assistantship lined up here at SIU, to get into development and so I've always felt like I've been decent at talking to people and found out I don't know what the heck development was until I found out that you get to talk with donors and you're working on you know, cultivating donors and you know a stewardship piece with you know this person's a donor. And like how can I help them continue to stay engaged and continue to want to take, give and be

involved in whatever way. And so being able to kind of be friendly with people and chat with people is something I really enjoyed. And having that opportunity as a G.A. kind of found like a new passion for me. And so now I really, really enjoy development. I really enjoy what I'm doing. And and yeah I think that finding something that I, I really enjoyed really, helped with that transition for me for sure. You know I think if, if development didn't really float my boat I'd probably be sitting here just kind of. Kind of kicking myself. I'd be a little more lost, but finding something else that I felt like I was good at and I felt like I was competent in, definitely helped with that transition for sure.

Greg: [10:58](#) What was that mental process of playing golf, like was there ever a moment of reflection of what's life gonna be like afterwards?

Drew: [11:08](#) Yeah definitely. It was kind of like, it's kind of Jekyll and Hyde and just kind of really dependent on how that day was going. You know if, if I'm playing golf and you're sitting there like you know, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen over par you're sitting there like, uh, I suck. I mean golf could be really fun for me in the future whereas there were

a lot of times in in college where, you know coming off the good times you know, coming off the high of you know, I just shot like the best round of school history, shot at 64 and that whole round, I mean, I putt a ball off the green. And like I made Coach Fetcho, he'd even like walked away because we were both just like oh man I think I really screwed this hole up and I had like twenty five feet left. Like on the fringe and coach is over there pouting and I went and just rolled that putt in like from twenty five feet like I was just like making putts left and right and, I mean just like everything could just kind of seem to go right. And whenever those days it kind of happened you're like like man, like I couldn't fully see myself doing this. But whenever you, that's, that was part of my decision as well as like I still didn't win that tournament. I think I got like fifth and as because my first two rounds although they were good, they weren't like good enough and definitely weren't as good as that and they weren't, they weren't as consistent either. Like it wasn't like I went you know, 68, 67, 64. And it was like 70 something 70 something and then just had a career round 64 is kind of how it went. So that's the part that I think not a lot of people realize is you know, any, any

blind squirrel could find a nut. But you know, once you get out on tour and you're playing professional golf you know, every tournament is you know, three to four rounds of constant, constantly playing and having to like, you shot the 64, now you got to come back the next day and you got to try to do that again and you got to try to make the cut and you have to just continue to put your life, I mean just play your absolute best golf every single day like there's no time for you know, a decent round ends up losing you money. So it's, it's very, very, very stressful world. But, but yeah that's that.

Greg: [13:28](#) How much would you say you identify with golf?

Drew: [13:35](#) Yeah it's something, once I started to really start to pursue it as something I did and like all the time. I'm trying to think there was a, there was a day where a buddy of mine and myself, we got out to the golf course as soon as it opened. I mean we were out there probably like 8:00, maybe a little bit sooner, because I think his mom dropped him off before she went to work and I think it was the same way, I think my dad dropped me off or something. And like, my dad texts me a couple times, like you good? And we just stayed at the course all day long. And then a friend of ours in the

pro shop had some glow golf balls. And so we were like bro you just want to stay here all day? And we're like yeah. So we wait until the sun went down and you know crack the glow sticks but when the golf balls, some of their golf balls they like light up when you bounce them. And so I mean it was just like pitch black outside and we just teed it up and went and played there too. I mean we played probably close to like a hundred holes of golf that day. And so I mean we got there at somewhere between like seven and eight and then we didn't leave until probably like nine or 10. So it was like a a full entire day of golf. That was, that was awesome. But yeah, I mean that's part of life. Just kind of how it, that's just kind of how it was for me in high school. I was like, I wanted to get as good as I could at the at the game of golf my senior.

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Drew : 00:00 I would, you know, if it was just a practice day and it wasn't like, you know, we'd have nine whole matches after school and if it was a day where we didn't have a match, I would get up before school and I would just go like hit putts sometimes in the pitch black until the sun would start slowly start to come out and you could finally start to see.

And I would just kinda just keep working on that. And then on days where we did have like a, like a, a match, then I would like just kind of sleep and go to school and then go to the match and what not. But it was, it was really, I always wanted to continue to try to get as good as I could. And, um, I think as far as my identity, my identity as being a golfer, I don't think it would actually really hit me until, um, once I graduated. And it was kind of making that transition out of, you know, I'm no longer a collegiate athlete. Um, you know, but what do I want to do next? As I went to a buddy of mine's graduation party, and as I was leaving, there were like some adults outside and stuff. And I was like, oh, hey, good to see you. And was chatting with some people. And um, as I was leaving, like, this guy's grandparents are just like, wait, who was that? And they're like, oh, that's the Novara kid. And they're like, oh, the golfer. And I was just like, oh wow, that's kinda neat. I was like, I was like, wow. So they're like, they know me as the golfer. So that was, that was actually kinda kinda cool for me. I was like, kinda like started puffing my chest. People know me. It's like whatever. But, um, no. Yeah, that was, that's something that I had worked hard for and I was to,

um, you know, get good enough to where people would know me as that. And, um, you know, I know it may not be like on a, on a world circuit, but a few people in, you know, in my hometown or region at least knew me as that. And I think that was something that was, uh, uh, that was actually really, really cool for me. So I definitely identified as that for sure.

Greg: [01:50](#) What would you say, for people who've never participated in college athletics, what don't they realize?

Drew : [01:56](#) It's a good question. Um, I'd say a lot of the stuff people are starting to, I think there's a little bit more awareness of it now. Um, you'll see a lot of, it seems like a lot of sports writers and ESPN analysts are, it's not completely one sided, but a lot of people are like, you know, the, the idea of amateurism, um, there's a lot of people think that athletes like college athletes need to be paid and we need to be compensated. I don't fully think that. I think like, I mean you are getting an education. Like I've always, you know, I've always valued that, that portion of it, of like, I think that's what amateurism is. Um, I mean it's as soon as you want. I mean, if you want to call it, you know, college professional sports, that's fine. But I, I think as long as the

players are, are labeled as amateurs, that's what an amateur is. You play it for the love of the game. And, um, I know college sports is, I mean it's just a different beast, you know, whenever you start talking about the power five schools and, um, I think one of the biggest things is Zion Williamson is obviously just like, I mean by him playing in college games, I mean, TV and media markets just skyrocketed. I mean, he made a lot of money for a lot of people and for him to only get the, um, the quote unquote and you know, the, the full ride as he got. Um, I think a lot of people were just like, oh, this isn't, this isn't right. But, um, like I said, I think a lot of that stuff is coming out now and I think a lot of people know a lot of the struggles of student athletes. And I think the NCAA has done a good job with some of their commercials. Um, you know, they've got somewhere, I don't know, like kid, like the kid like wakes up crack of dawn. He goes and works out and comes back has a snack, uh, walks to class, um, heads back, tries to get some lunch then heads to practice and then comes back and then he's got to go to study tables. Then he's got to study some more, and then he's gotta try to find a time to get dinner and go back to, to sleep from there. So I think a lot

of people know that being an athlete is very, very time consuming. Um, as far as like the things that people don't know, that's a, that's a good question. Um, I think until you've actually lived it, I don't think you understand the, the pressure that all of that, having all that time consumed in one day, um, and the pressure of trying to make sure you're at the right place at the right time every single time, um, is, is, you know, it's a pretty delicate line and it's, it's, it's tough to, uh, continue to strive for that every single day. Cause I mean, it's, that's what it is. It's like, you know, a lot of people you could do that for a day or two. Um, I mean, myself personally, now that I'm not required to, I'll still, I'll go work out in the mornings or something before work, you know, the, the rec center opens at 5:30 and I'll get the get in there right around 5:30. But I don't, I don't do that every single day. Like I used to have to, like, if we had 6:00 AM workouts, it didn't matter that, you know, if you went out on Friday night and we had an early practice on Saturday morning at, you didn't, didn't get to sleep in. Like you're, you're, you know, mandated, like you've got to, to be here at this specific time. Or, um, if you had a midterm on Wednesday, sorry if you pulled the all nighter, but, um,

you're all nighters gonna at least have to take a stop at 6:00 AM because you're going and pushing your body physically in workouts and then you can go take your test. So you're doing all that on like no sleep. Um, but I think, again, I think you learn a lot about yourself. You know, there's, it's, it's kind of a, it's a, it's a weird, it's a unique feeling of, you know, seeing how far you can actually push your body in certain situations like that to, to see, you know, how much, how much pain or what, what can I tolerate, what can I handle and continue to still move forward before I'm finally just like, okay, I've had enough. And, um, so I think, like I said, until you've actually gone through it, um, it's, it's really tough to put into words of, of what it's like. But again, I mean, I wouldn't, I wouldn't trade being a student athlete for anything. Like, it was a, some of the best years of my life. I built some relationships with people that, um, you know, that I have to this day. Um, I've been in a couple people's weddings because of our relationships. Um, some people will be in mind because of it. And, um, yeah, like that's, that's been, that's been awesome for sure. So a combination of relationships that are built and then the time commitment.

Greg: 06:22 All right, let's go into, uh, I guess just what you do now. Um, so you could say more for camera purposes, like, yeah, just kind of restate that. Yeah. Like, you know, um, blah blah blah here at SIU and this is what the job entails.

Drew : 06:43 Yeah. Yeah. I'm here at SIU, I am the S Club coordinator. So our S club is our student athletes letter winners club. So as soon as you graduate, if you received a letter here, uh, for a varsity sport, you become, you know, an S club member. You are an alum associated with our, our athletic department. So I'm an S club member, um, and all of the other S club members are, you know, members who played any sport track, um, swim and dive basketball, baseball, football, softball, volleyball, whatever. Um, and so I was the coordinator for that. My job is to try to be a liaison between, you know, that group of alums and our university and our athletic department. So I try to keep them engaged with everything we have going on and try to invite them back for, uh, for special events. You know, homecoming's a big one and trying to keep people engaged with our university. Um, you know, try to keep that, that pride alive because I think as soon as that dies, then the institution really starts to go downhill. As soon as, you know, if you

don't have alums that are staying engaged with your, with your institution, the word doesn't get out. People don't know what a, what a Saluki is anymore. And so I think it's, um, it's very critical that we keep people, um, involved and engaged. Um, and you know, eventually, you know, whether they want to or not, they'll have that option to become, um, you know, a financial supporter of the institution and you know, from a development and a fundraising perspective, that's the ultimate goal. Really what I want to do is, um, you know, being in the unique position of being a former student athlete, you know, I want to continue to do everything that I can, can be like, you know, I was in your shoes. Um, I just want you to come back and continue to enjoy it. I mean, like we talked about being a student athletes, very, very stressful. Um, you are on time commitments for, for four years here of you're being told exactly where you've got to be. Um, and you've got some free time in there obviously, but uh, it can be stressful. So now it's like, hey man, like you did it. Like you got through that gauntlet. You're out in the professional world now. That's fine. Come back and actually enjoy the college life. Come, come to a tailgate. You don't have to

drink if you don't want to. You can if you want to, um, but come back, come get some food, come hang out with people and come network with people. So that's, that's what I, that's what I get to do. Um, being at a smaller-ish institution, you know, quote unquote a mid-major, um, you know, just cause we're not a, not a power five is why we get that title. But, um, at the same time we don't have as big of staffs as what a lot of power five schools do. And so along with that, I, uh, do what I can to help. Um, uh, with Marissa over in marketing, uh, I tried to help Michael out with some of our graphic design work. Um, so like self-taught in that. I really enjoy that. That's a, like another hobby that's turned into a hobby of mine. Um, I oversee certain ticketing accounts. Um, so some of the people who have season tickets and who have donated to the university, I oversee their accounts. So like if they, if they're like, hey man, do you have any tickets to an away game? I'm like, absolutely. Like, I'm their point of contact for that. That way we don't have, you know, just one ticket person trying to see, you know, a couple thousand different accounts. We've got a few different people trying to see maybe just a few hundred accounts and try to take that load off of someone else. Um,

and then along with that I run, um, our athlete network website, um, which is called the Saluki network as basically it's still another way of trying to engage, um, former alums and also tried to bring them back and create mentorship opportunities for current current student athletes as well. There's a lot of different aspects with that website, but that's one of them. Um, another one is like, you know, if you're a recent grad near, you know, in a similar position as to what I was my senior year of college and just being like, I don't really know what I want to do. You know, we have career sources on here, so like, it's like, Hey, you may not know what you want to do, but have you ever thought about a, this type of a job? You may not have even known that type of job was even a job. You didn't know somebody got paid to do that and you're like, that sounds kind of cool. Like, um, there are different resources, you know, um, whether it's like self-help things or you know, like 10, 10 ways to, to manage stress better. It's just a real click or um, real quick, real quick, real quick, a way that you just click on something and it takes you to uh ways that you can improve yourself. So I get to do a lot of stuff with people and um, try to just help in any way that I can.

- Greg: 11:09 Sweet. Outside of being an athlete, what would you say you want to be known for?
- Drew : 11:54 Onto the question at hand. What do I want to be known for other than being an athlete? It's a great question. Um, I took some sports psych, sports psych classes, um, that kind of addressed this as well. It's like a lot of student athletes and a lot of athletes, you know, come once, once that, you know, once the final whistle blows, the ball stops bouncing, whatever you want to call it, whatever analogy you wanna use, once that stops for you. Making that transition is kind of hard because like I said, I mean my dad was a coach. Um, and dad has been with me ever since I was born obviously. And so for 22 years of my life I've been known as an athlete. And so, um, you know, 22 divided by 25, whatever that is, that percentage of my life, um, has been devoted to being known as an athlete. And so now as I, you know, as that chapter kind of ends trying to, um, you know, see the chapter moving forward, what I want to, what I want to be known as, you know, it's, um, on a personal level, I want to be, you know, the, the best husband that I can be here in the future. Um, you know, if I mean God willing be the best dad that I can be, a best friend that I can

be, whatever. Um, and along with that, you know, stay in kind of on that same level as like, I want to be the best coworker that I can be. Like, am I someone that helps build people up or am I someone who's constantly tearing people down? You know, hopefully it's, hopefully it's always the, um, the, the, the first one I can only, I can never remember ladder and former, whatever, but so that's another thing. Build up my, build up my vocab. Hopefully it's the, the former or the latter, whatever the good one was. Hopefully, I'm someone who builds people up and, um, I always like cracking the stupid jokes. Every once in while I'll get a couple, get a couple of laughs out of people. So hopefully that helps bring people up. But that's something I want to be know for is, um, someone who I want to enjoy the rest of my life. And, you know, life's too short to, um, you know, it's too short to be too silly and to, to always just be, to be laughing. I mean, you still have to be, you know, professional and get your things done, but it's also too short to be completely just, you know, mellow and, you know, just vanilla and just, just boring. Like you gotta have a little bit of fun with it as well. So I want to, um, enjoy the rest of my days on earth and, um, you know, only being 25, I hope

I still have a lot of days left, but I want to make the most out of those for sure. And just to kind of just be known as, um, you know, someone who, you know, whatever legacy I leave behind, hopefully that is, you know, helping the people after me.

Drew [14:37](#) So nothing, because that's all I, I'm so boring, terrible, terrible. I heard somebody call me Cowboys, offensive play calling from last year vanilla. And I was like, that's pretty spot on. So I stuck with that. But at the same time, I love vanilla. Like I like vanilla ice cream is kind of my thing.

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Drew: [00:00](#) All in it, but it's good stuff. Good stuff.

Greg: [00:06](#) Uh, I mean, I guess you can quickly touch upon, um, that transition of how you got your graduate assistantship and I mean, did the GA lead to this job? Yeah. Okay. So just kinda talk about earning the GA?

Drew: [00:23](#) Yeah. I, um, as a student athlete kind of before my time was ending, I was really starting to see what I could do to go ahead and, um, again, like I didn't want to have to rely on my family to, to pay my education. Um, again, maybe it's just an ego thing. I really wanted to try to do it myself and just to say that I did it. And so going through that I was

like, you know, how am I, how am I going to make this, you know, how, how am I gonna make this dream become a reality? And so for that, I was like, you know, I, our weight trainer at the time was like, well, I'm a, I'm a graduate assistant in the business office. You know, you get a tuition waiver and on top of that you get a monthly stipend of X. And I was like, okay. So like I was like, so you pretty much pay off like all your fees and stuff after like a month or so. And she was like, yeah, like I'm pretty much getting paid to go to school. And I was like, where'd they do that at? Like I want to, I want to get in on that and like, let's, let's go ahead and get the masters paid for it. Like, what do I gotta do? So I went and talked to, um, the person who oversaw all our business office here in athletics. Um, I gave him my resume, actually got a chance to sit down with him for an interview and say, you know, I'm still trying to figure out exactly what I want to do, but I do want to go to grad school here and I want to get my master's here and I want to, uh, you know, be a graduate assistant and get involved in athletics. And after I left that still, I felt good about it but I wasn't real sure if I was going to get it or not. So I stopped, kept reaching out to people. Like I reached out to,

um, our concessions lady. I reached out to um, equipment guys, um, strength and conditioning guys and even um, our sports medicine team. Unfortunately with the sports medicine you had to have your, your, your undergrad had to be in like, um, like sports training or like athletic training and mine was exercise science. I was like close but it had to be like, like more certified in like on point with that. So that was out. The equipment staff at the time was um, was full cause I think they had returning GA's and it was the same with the weight strength and conditioning staff. So I was holding out on the business one and um, I got an email saying that they decided to pick a uh, softball player who had more of a business background and I was like, that makes sense. And I know that person. And I was like, I would have chose her as well. Like, just, just knowing her, I was like, she's phenomenal. Like that's a great choice. I was like, no hard feelings at all is I can feel mind just hang onto my resume and um, you know, if you hear of anything, please, please be sure to pass on. Um, thankfully that did happen. Um, and our development officers needed a graduate assistant cause theirs had just left. And so they reached out to me, um, small world. They guy that

interviewed me, his oldest brother, um, was my dad's best man and so he knew my dad, my dad, he was so, there was a a, an age gap though as my dad didn't really remember him quite as much, but he's like, I think I know your dad is like your dad's Linda Varner. I was like, yeah, he's in my oldest brother and it was his best man and vice versa. Like they were best men in each other's weddings. I was like, well, small world. And then the other person in my interview was like, Oh, I had an uncle who was the principal over at Murphysboro's and I was like, by chance does that filter panty? And she's like, yes. I was like, yep, he, he hired my dad. So I'm like, just laughing. They're just like, oh my gosh. I'm like, all right, well I guess we have to hire you now. And we're just laughing. And I went, I was stoked. I like told my dad, I was like, I was like, I know I've just got interviewed by two people that know you. And he said, well, I mean, if you can't get that job, you're pretty much done for anyway. You might as well just start, say you might just wanna just find something else to do if he can't get that one. So, uh, luckily I did, I was able to get that and it led to kind of like a new hobby for me almost is they, they told me this, said, I don't know how good you are

with computers, but we really need someone that can work with Photoshop or some kind of graphic design software. And I was like, I'm really proficient in like Microsoft word. Like that's on my resume. But that's, I was like, I've never worked with Adobe Photoshop or InDesign illustrator, any of that stuff. They're like, all right, well do you think you can learn it? I was like, I think I can. I was like, I think I'll, I'll figure it out. And um, basically just started watching, the first time I opened up Photoshop, I had made this big blank screen pops up or whatever and there's file edit view, all this stuff at the top and there's a bunch of stuff over on the side and I'm like, yeah, this is great, but what do you do with it? Like where he really start with it. I was like, do I just like, just imagine a building going up and then I can just, and then it's imaginably just made in this thing. I was like, Oh, what goes on? And so I found a, I just started Googling stuff and found some YouTube videos and they were just like, okay, so you have to open a document first. I'm like, okay, we're getting somewhere, like whatever. And so just starting that from the ground up, um, it kinda turned into a similar way of how my golfing career started and was just like, let's just start from scratch. Let's try it out.

And as I started to actually like learn and kind of see improvements and changes, I was just like, this is kind of cool. Like I actually really enjoy this. So now it's part of my, like, it's part of my job as part of the things that I do. And I like, like it's one of the, one of the many things that I like thoroughly enjoy and do enjoy doing is just like, you know, creating images, trying to step out of my comfort zone and kind of push myself to be like, you know, how can, you know, you can see a bunch of, you know, graphic design or a bunch of different graphics on social media that other schools and, um, professional teams are coming out with. But you're like, how do I do something similar? And that's a little cutting edge like that, but not completely copy it. Like, how do I do something completely create something myself? And that's, um, that's a whole new challenge in and of itself. And I'm finding that out. But it's, it's, that's, that's something that's very exciting. And, um, but anyway, thankfully I've, I've the, the folks that I worked for thought I did a, um, and a good enough job, um, as a graduate assistant and they're like, well, we actually, we really need someone to start reaching out to alums cause we don't have the time. Like we're, we're trying to, you know,

go meet with, with donors and other alumni who want to support the school. But we've got to get, you know, the quote unquote for I guess just for like lack of a better term, kind of like the low hanging fruit that are out there. Um, you know, recent grads like myself who may not be at the same giving capacity as someone who's, um, a retired doctor or lawyer or engineer, whatever. Uh, but just trying to, you know, keep someone like myself and some of our friends just kind of keep them involved and be like, oh man, that's, I use like looking into good this year. Like I remember a couple of years ago that weren't doing so hot and I'm like, I want to stay involved. And like, this would be a cool game to go to, whatever, like just trying to keep people involved with what we have going on. Cause as soon as that dies, like we'll die with it. So I'm fortunate enough that the S club coordinator, um, position was, um, officially reopened and uh, I was able to step into that role. So, um, so that graduate assistant ship position led pretty much straight into this and um, I've been, been very fortunate in, in that respect for sure.

Greg:

08:06

Okay. What would you say was the transition from having golf as a huge priority part to working a career where it's

not necessarily golf based, but I mean you're still interacting with people. You're still technically in athletics, just talk about that transition.

Drew:

08:28

Yeah, that's a great question. Um, yeah, cause I as a student athlete, as a, as a golfer, you know, you're not like one of the revenue generating sports. Right? And so seeing that, yeah, there's a little bit of jealousy that comes along with it, but you kind of understand all at the same time. But then whenever you start seeing some of the other sports you like, um, I mean just to be blunt, like we haven't had the best football season that year in a while. We haven't had the best basketball seasons in a while. We've had success in both sports, but it hasn't been, you know, um, you know, play off playoff contention worthy, national title contention worthy. And so whenever you kinda start seeing, you know, other sports struggle a little bit, you know, you, you kind of get like, not mad, but like sort of frustrated. You're like, and you guys get like all this stuff, like what the heck? And so shifting from that kind of a thing of just being like, man, it's really these football guys like these guys got, I got all these tee shirts and stuff like we have, we have like polos and khaki shorts. Like that's fine, but I just want like a tee shirt

that says Saluki on it and it's like these guys got like nine or whatever it is. I don't know what the number is, but you exaggerate whenever you get frustrated. So that's what we did. That's what I would always happen. And now you kind of fast forward into this role and you know, I'm at every, every home football and basketball game and so you know, whether they're doing well or not, you know, my job is to go and you know, act like that's the most important thing going on in my life at that point. And yeah, it is. It's a little bit of a transition because you, you still cheer for the other teams and stuff, but at the same time you want to be better than them and you want to at least to kind of have that pride of being like, I mean, yeah, sick like you guys won that game, but have you won like a conference title lately? Like we did and which is stupid because it is like it's apples and oranges. It completely different, completely different things. But you kind of like having like those bragging rights of, you know, I think, and I think every sport here probably has that. Like you want to see all these other teams do well, but at the same time you want to be the team that tries to bring the pride to the, to the school. And it's like we were the conference champions, like not you guys

like or you know, softball. Um, we made it 10 NCAA post season. You guys didn't like trying to have that pride but all at the same time still mesh it of just like, although we want to be better softball, like we want to be better than our baseball players. We want our baseball players to be the best baseball team in the nation. Um, and same thing. I mean it's, um, you know, there's a good mix of competitiveness but also wanting them to get to do well. And it's, it's the same way on a golf team as well. Cause it's an individual sport that, you know, the NCAA has found a way to turn it into a team sport. And so it's the same with high school. And so you're out there by yourself. I don't get to pass the ball to anybody. Like if I'm having a bad day, like it's on me. Like I gotta grind it out. Like, at least in basketball. Like if I'm missing threes, I can get involved in another way. I can go, you know, I can go take a charge or something on defense, get the ball back. I can, um, you know, getting an assist, pass it to somebody who's hot or you know, grind and go get a rebound or something, do something else. That doesn't involve me attempting to put the ball in the basket and making a fool out of myself. Um, no baseball is, it's similar. Um, you're, it's kinda like a, a

mix of both of them. I feel like, like you know, the plays, I mean if you're up at the plate, you're there by yourself. If you're out in the field, the play that you're making is, is somewhat by yourself but at the same time you can get bailed out by someone else. You know, like if I make a couple of years and the pitcher goes and strike somebody out to retire the side, like I'm like, whew, dang, that's nice. Or if I'm pitching in and you know, I flow one out over the middle and do just yaks one, I'm sitting there like, crap, the left field or Rob's a home run, you're like, Ooh, she got guys that can kind of bail you out. Whereas in golf, like you're trying to bail yourself out the entire time. But, um, that was kind of a really weird transition that I just had right there to go all the way into that, but really came full circle full circle on that. But now it is really cool to like still work with, you know, the basketball and the football teams and um, see the amount of support that people have for our, our entire institution. You know, um, as I've gotten to know donors, uh, through like the basketball games and the football games, you know, a lot of them, um, are still like, oh yeah, you guys won the conference title, right? Like I'm like, yeah, how did you know that? And like, all, I mean,

just cause they just cause they pay money to go see these sports doesn't mean they just absolutely don't care about the rest of them. And so that part is really cool. It's to see, uh, the amount of pride that this whole region, um, has for this entire university.

Greg: [13:24](#) Have you been able to find something with the same focus you had with golf?

Drew: [14:04](#) Great question. Great question. That's a tough one. Um, I would say honestly is definitely everything's on a just a different scale. Um, I would say graphic design has a lot of the same stuff cause I, if somebody gives me a task and they're like, hey, we need a graphic made for whatever, like I'm doing whatever I can to put the best look and put my best foot forward on it and, uh, accomplish that project at the best that I can. You know, so if I, if a company's wanting their logo put up, um, obviously they're paying a lot of money for that. Like, how can I best represent their brand with this? And so I think trying to, you know, just kind of fight through your own mind and, you know, mentally just tried to, um, you know, sometimes like with arches.

Drew:

00:00

Stuff. I mean, I've, I've never had so much of respect for like artists and people who are into art because like, after trying to just come up with an idea for something, um, just out of nowhere is like crazy time-consuming in and of itself. So just trying to, you know, find ways to, to battle through that as hard enough and then you know mentally just trying to, once you have that, then to just kinda sit there and fight through the system and, and kinda fight your own emotions and, um, your own knowledge to kind of step outside your boundaries and be like, what's the easiest way or, you know, what are some ways, like I've gotten an idea in my head, how do I make that happen? Um, and so it's, it's not, it's not completely relatable to golf cause I think golf has been just a, um, you know, and same with any sport. It's just a, it's just a different beast. And, um, there's so many, just more know physical aspects to it. Then there is, you know, if you're, um, you know, sitting down at a desk or even if you're just putting on an event, um, but you know, there's a lot of the same, you know, if you have a passion and a drive for something, you know, continuing to try to do that to the fullest is I think where you'll see a lot of the same similarities. That's a good question though.

- Greg: 01:20 We already kind of talked about how golf shaped you with perseverance. Is there anything else you want to add to that? Just how maybe athletics taught work ethic or anything that carries over into your job now?
- Drew: 01:40 Yeah, no, I mean I think sports will, um, absolutely teach you a lot about yourself. Um, they teach you a lot about others as well. And I think, um, somebody said if you want to know someone's true character, just take them golfing and you will definitely see it. You'll see some people that, um, you know, some people can absolutely like absolutely have a good time. Even if they're not doing great, they can brush it off and they can get past it. And um, condolences to those, I mean, kudos to those people. Like congrats. Like that's it, that's a task. And then you'll see guys who are just completely hot headed and don't know how to control themselves and they start cussing and throwing stuff and just making an absolute, I mean for lack of a better term, just absolutely ass of themselves. And then you see guys who, it's kind of funny now, like people just sit there and make excuses and I think you see a lot of that in the real world as well. You'll see people who, I don't know if, uh, if, uh, if you straight up told a coworker or something like,

hey, no, like we can't do this. And then later on they're like, hmm, they go ahead and do it anyway. Try and to, you know, hone in your own emotions and frustrations and try to work through and, you know, resolve those problems in a professional manner. ,And sometimes you'll see people who just straight up lose it and you're just like, I mean, come on. And so I think just trying to, I don't know, try to be the best person that you can and trying to, uh, continue to, you know, build people up. Like I said, and, and I don't know, there's a lot of similarities, um, between it that I think the, the, the sports will, will teach you about life. But, um, I think a lot of that stuff is, it's mostly just kind of like what you can learn about yourself. And it, I think is self reflection is a very, very big thing that sports can teach you. Because if you want to get better, you have to, you have to go back and relive those, those tough moments of just like, man missed, missed the front end of the one-and-one for the free throws to end the game. We lose by one. Like it's a memory I want to erase, but I have to go back if I want to. If I want to get past, get past that and get better. I gotta go back and relive like what's going through my mind, what's going through my, my emotions and like why did this

happen? And I think if you can hang onto some of those, those, those painful moments and remember how bad that felt and use that as a motivational force of I never want to feel that way again. I think you can continue to make that priority and continue to work hard and make sure that that stuff doesn't happen again. And I think that's the same way in the professional world. If, you know, if you screw something up, I'm trying to go back and be like, well why did I screw that up? Or what was going on that made me screw this thing up? And trying to figure out what's going on in your own life, what's going on in your own head of why that happened and try your absolute damndest to make sure that that doesn't happen again in the future. Um, there's a lot of things and there's a lot of skills I think that you learn from, from playing sports.

Greg: [04:46](#) Totally right. Um, you mentioned self reflection. How would you identify yourself?

Drew: [04:59](#) Yeah, I think I'm a, uh, I'm a pretty even keel dude. Like I feel like I'm pretty much in the middle on anything. Um, even, you know, politics seem to be a huge debate today and I feel like you can give me any kind of a viewpoint and I can at least see both sides of it. Like I may, I may lean

more one way than I will another, but I can at least see where people are coming from. And I think that's, um, a skill of mine of, I think that's why I'm so, so able to relate to a lot of people of, you know, if I'm talking to someone in a suite or something or, um, you know, talking to a donor, you know, if they happen to say something that I don't necessarily disagree with, I feel like I'm impartial enough that I can kind of listen to what they hear and I'm like, hey, that's a good point. I can present other ones. I mean, we can just have some kind of a discussion on that. Um, but at the same time, I don't think anyone will ever feel like I, like ever attacked them. So I think that's something I've just, um, you know, I do, I do have, you know, some morals that I do stand on and I'm, I'm, I'm pretty firm on, uh, but there's, you know, a lot of things in life, you know, I think a lot of humans are, I mean, I think everybody wants to be the best person that they can be and the best version of themselves that they can be. And so you hear too many times it was just like, man, that person's absolutely stupid. Maybe their point was stupid. They didn't, nobody tries to be stupid or tries to fail at something. So trying to figure out like what's going on in other people's head or, um, any,

like, again, like their viewpoints and stuff and just trying to be like, okay, well I see that point, I disagree with it or whatever. Um, but I can at least, you know, kind of play that, that middle ground thing. Um, and I think even, I don't know, I, I feel like that's also helps me, you know, if I'm, if I'm maybe not having a, a great day, at the same time, I don't want my attitude or my own feelings and emotions to bring someone else down. So, um, you know, if I, if I'm like the first one in the office and I'm just like dog tired or if I'm going through some personal stuff that's just really just eating me up. As soon as someone else walks to the door, like good morning, I'm like, hey, good morning. I try to just put on just a, you know, a brave face if I, if I can. Um, and so far I feel like I've been able to do a good job of that. So I think that's, as far as, you know, how I would identify myself is I feel like I'm a pretty friendly guy. I try to put others first as much as I possibly can because those are some of the morals and the values that, um, that I, that I value and I'm trying to, to be the best person that I can is just, uh, um, something that I, that I take pride in. So I wish more Carbondale Terrier people could be like that. Those Terriers man.

Greg: 07:51 Shots fired. Wow. Alright, we're wrapping up here. Wrapping up here. Um, just kind of talking about your identity, but in what way would you introduce yourself to somebody? Like if you're meeting me for the first time, how would you introduce yourself?

Drew: 09:12 Oh, um, well you've got some great questions. That's another good one. Um, I think for me it usually depends on, I don't know, it depends on a lot of factors. Like, um, it depends on the environment I'm in. Uh, you know, if I'm at, you know, if I'm meeting with a bunch of student athletes, it's, hey, I'm Drew Novara. Ah, I played golf here. Like, okay, like I'm so-and-so, I ran track, oh nice, good to meet you, or whatever. Um, other than that, my greeting is usually pretty, pretty, pretty standard. It's, you know, if a donor or somebody walks in, Hey, how's it going? I'm Drew Novara. I'm the S Club Coordinator. I oversee our letter winners club and I try to stay engaged with, uh, alumni athletes. I'm trying to tell them a little bit of what I do. If, uh, you know, if I'm going to a, if I'm going to, uh, a church service or a Bible study is like, hey, I'm Drew Novara. I, uh, I grew up in this church and you know, I've been going to church ever since. Uh, I tried to read my

Bible as much as I can, uh, or whatever. So I think a lot of it just depends on, um, having just a little bit of information on, you know, kind of like the environmental factors that play into it of, oh, hey, like, where am I? Like, what's going through this person's head of like, what are they kind of expecting from me? Um, and what are, what kind of questions are, you know, what kind of information they're trying to get from me.

Greg: [10:40](#) Um, sounds like you've kinda been able to juggle multiple identities and what not. Um, how would you say for, maybe, someone who is an athlete and it's like, you know, football has been my whole life, never had any other choice or whatever. Like how have you been able to, one, balance those identities but also kind of dive into those roles? Is it from, you know, exploring new things and trying new things or how did that come to be?

Drew: [11:08](#) Gosh dang, this guy is sharp. So you're, what exactly are you wanting?

Greg: [11:12](#) Um, so basically..

Drew: [11:15](#) Like what I would, what I would tell like a football player or? Just any sports? Any am I stating more just golf related things?

Greg: 11:19 You would not even that, just like a, like, you know, I feel like one of the ways I could... You mentioned before about how your transition has been kind of easy from golf. You know, cause you're involved in, or you knew you wanted to be a GA. Um, and even just exploring what sports studies is going to be like, stuff like that. Like kind of like a sense of encouragement of like, you know, the more you put yourself out there, the more you also learn about yourself. Um, you know, you learned that being a PA wasn't really the right path for you. So kind of like that, you know, like putting yourself out there, what that has taught you and um, just like how it's OK that I didn't just focus on golf. Like I said, I was able to achieve.

Drew: 12:09 I think if like from me, like an encouragement side I think. And even just from an educational side of things, it's like, you know, myself, the, the experiences that I've gone through, um, you know, millions of other people who have gone through them as well. There are a tons of student athletes in the nation right now. Uh, there were a ton last year or the year before that, uh, whenever I was playing. There's, I mean, there's a ton of student athletes. That are going through, um, a lot of the same experiences. And so a

lot of them can also speak on their own behalf about what those experiences were for them as well. And one thing that, um, you know, it's, it's has come out in a lot of research and writing and stuff like that is, you know, to the, to all of the current student athletes out there, it's like, you know, you're still focused on, you know, I don't really care what somebody else went through. Like, I know my goals. I want to be the best that I can and I want to, um, you know, pursue this. I want to be a professional athlete. That's fine. Um, just know that there is, there's going to be a day, I don't care what sports you're in, there's going to be a day that you retire. You know, golf is the only sport that you can continue to play for your whole life by yourself. Um, but there's still gonna be a day where even if you are a professional, like Jack Nicholas is retired, um, you know, guys like, like Gary Player, he retired. Like some of those guys can still play on senior tour stuff. There's going to be a time when that stops and that kind of how you move forward and how you handle that is going to be different for everyone. You know, football players, I feel like it would be very, very difficult for, because, um, you know, an NFL running back their careers probably over by the

time they're in their 30s or so, if, if they've had a very good career. Um, and you know, you've still got more than likely statistically you've got over half of your life to live. I'm trying to push, you know, that identity, that 30 year identity of being a football player, trying to push that behind you and move forward. And so I, you know, to those people, I would say, you know, like you're not the only one that's been through it. Um, and it's, it's not an easy transition. Uh, I don't care what sport it is, it's, it's not easy, but, um, it's, it's very, very possible and I think anybody can get through it. And so one way that I think is maybe even the best way to get through it is to talk to people. And I think having the education, I think that's part of it is, you know, once that time comes, not knowing what to do is, I think where I think that's, it's, it's scary to not know where you're going next. And I think just the education piece of having someone who's, who's been there, done that, come talk to you and just be like, all right, well I was in the same exact boat, man. I didn't know exactly where I was going to go, but you know what? I think you know what I see for you. You're very good in, in this, like, I think you could do X, Y.

Drew: 00:00 and I think you can do that moving forward and I think that would work out really well for you or whatever. And so I think just trying to educate people that, you know, I think a lot of student athletes are spoiled. I was spoiled. Um 100%. I mean you're getting, um, you know, very large financial sum, getting to pay your, um, your, your college debts. Like I'm thankful enough and fortunate enough I came out of college debt free because of my time here at SIU and you know, there's a lot of resources available to you to, to help you, um, through whatever. And there's, there's so many things that as a student athlete you take for granted. Um, and I mean with that, like I said, like I think a lot of them are spoiled. Like that's, that's just the reality of it. But if you can, you know, try your best to continue to fight through that. And part of being spoiled was like, I think a lot of, um, the out the outside world kind of sees student athletes and sees these issues of like, oh, like big deal. Sorry that you were, um, an NFL running back, I'm sorry, you had to go make millions of dollars, um, playing it, um, you know, playing for the Cowboys or whatever, or sorry, you went to a power five school and you're on TV all the time, it must suck for you to have to finally kiss those days goodbye.

But, um, you know, if that's all you've known in your life, like that is going to be a difficult transition. And for the people that are, you know, on the outside looking in, it's like, well, I mean if, if you had to stop exactly what you were doing, let's say, you know, um, through high school and everything, you got terrific grades. You went and you were, um, you know, got your engineering degree and you became an engineer to firm or whatever. If you had to stop that right now and say, all of that's done in behind you, um, start something else. Like go do something else. Like you'd be lost. And it's a, it's a very, very difficult transition to make. And I think, um, you know, the, the knowledge and the education piece about that and all of the research that's out there about that and all of the people who have, have been, been there, done that is very, very beneficial. And I think those resources are there for the student athletes and if they just use them, I think they can see it very, very fun and fulfilling life from that

Greg :

02:20

Awesome. You've definitely touched on it. Um, but I'm gonna ask this in case there's anything else you want to add to it, but, uh, what type of impact would you say you want to make on the world?

Drew:

02:57

Yeah. Um, another good one, these are deep, impact on the world. I think just kind of going off of my last point of, you know, student athletes, it's something you, you know, playing sports is probably something he did, uh, your your whole life and to, you know, in college this is a place where some athletes will go on and continue their career. And then as you see in all of the NCAA commercials, the majority of them, this is kind of where their athletic career stops. And so trying to help, you know, somebody out there, even if it's just one person, two people, whatever, I'm trying to help them, you know, make that the smoothest transition as possible, um, into their next, their next, into their, their next, you know, field their next, um, occupation, whatever it is. Uh, trying to make that transition as smooth as possible for them. Um, just because I know what it's, what it's like and so do plenty of other student athletes. And so knowing what that transition is like and being able to, to educate people and be like, hey, like more than likely I know exactly what you're going through. Um, and trying to help them through that. Just cause I mean that's always been, um, you know, some of the things that I valued as trying to help others. And so if I can help others in a way

that I feel like I am competent enough to do so as this is as definitely a goal of mine. So if I can stay in college athletics and you know, continue to help student athletes get through that. Um, and also I just loved being around sports as well. So good to get to enjoy, uh, watching some sports and help it student athletes all at the same time. It's just an icing on the cake.

Greg: [04:43](#) Alright, so you're going to repeat this statement. My name is ABC. I'm a blank, blank, blank, and I am more than athlete. So I could be like, my name is Greg Camillone. I'm a videographer, traveler, animal lover, and more than athlete.

Drew: [05:49](#) My name is Drew Novara. I'm a young professional, a future husband and a Christian and I am more than an athlete.

Greg : [05:55](#) Sweet. I actually meant to ask you about that. Just tell me again, like this is more for audience purposes. Give like a brief statement, like what religion you practice. Um, and then I guess like how deeply you practice it.

Drew: [06:20](#) Absolutely. Um, I grew up going to a Lutheran church, um, pretty much my whole life. My whole family's Lutheran. There's a few Catholics in, involved, but they're not, they're

not blood, they're kind of married in, but that's okay. Um, and so I grew up going to Lutheran church my whole life. It's a very, very traditional, um, some would call it boring. I still currently like, I still, I still like it. Um, and then really my fiancé, um, she just grew up just plain Christian, like that's completely fine. And so as we continued to, uh, to grow in our relationship, um, I started going to Bible studies with her at her church. And, um, you know, part of the, the Lutheran doctrine is you don't really take communion unless you are confirmed, um, Lutheran and to be confirmed, you go through like a confirmation class and you kind of have to like do some stuff like that. And, uh, she and I kind of discussed where like, I don't really think it's anywhere in the Bible that you have to do, like go through a class just to get communion. And I'm like, so I mean that's, that's whatever. I understand the tradition of it. And I was like, but I think in order for her to, to be more comfortable and to like grow more, um, as a Christian is I was like, you know, I don't mind just going to a Christian Church. Like I think as long as you're going to a church that, um, is, is scripture based and is teaching out of the Bible, which is, I mean it's the common, it's the most

common book that is the common denominator for all the churches. Like just go off the Bible, like that's God's word is right there in your hands. So, um, I think as long as you can find a church that is, you know, scripture based, as long as they are just taking things out of the Bible, I think that's good enough. And, um, so that's, you know, I, I, um, I have a, my best friend, one of my best friends, um, he is out in California right now, uh, going to school to be a pastor. And, um, one thing that he and I have talked about is he was like, Hey man, you should like read this book with me. So he and I are reading like I thought it was just gonna be like a, like a chapter book or something. It's more like a textbook. It's got like a lot of pages. And then I was like, this isn't exactly what I signed up for, but I'm, I'm with it. I'm continuing to learn things as well. And then also use it to kind of relate back to scripture and to, to, to start reading it. Cause I think there's two, two often times where people use their Bible more like a dictionary of just like, hey, this is going on in my life. Like what do I need to, what's what scripture say about? And they kind of find something like, Oh, okay, I'm good. And then they close it and it's done. And so something I'm trying to get a lot better at. Cause

that was me. I mean I've, I've done that plenty of times and I'm like, what's scripture say about this thing that I'm going through? And you're like, okay, cool. And then you close the book, whatever that may be. And so that's something I'm trying to get better at is, um, kind of understanding God's word as well. And, um, as well as just going and actually just looking it up and just reading it myself and try to figure it out and kinda through the context that's, that's in there. Because there's, I mean you know, in my belief is that, that book is, um, you know, it's, it's God-breathed material and so anything that he wants us to know, I think is in there. So trying to, um, continue to, to, you know, live a life that's, um, more and more Christ like each day is something that I strive for as well.

Greg : [09:53](#) Awesome. That is it. Um, I was leave the floor open, you know, if you really want to add anything. Maybe there's something I may have missed that you feel like comes to mind that you want to add. The floor is yours. If not, I think we're good.

Drew: [10:11](#) Um, yeah, no pretty in depth questions. I was like, I think we got it.

Greg : [10:17](#) Sweet.

Drew: [10:18](#) You do a great job. Thanks. Thanks boys.

Greg : [10:21](#) Much appreciated.

Drew: [10:23](#) My pleasure. Thank you. Thanks for asking. Man. I appreciate it, puppies.

CONNOR JAMES TRANSCRIPT

Audio File: 000_191216

Greg: [00:01](#) So this is basically just for camera purposes and we know who you are. Yeah. If you could just start with a statement like what your name is and where you're from.

Connor: [02:57](#) I'm Connor James. I'm from Mattoon, Illinois. And you want me to look at you the entire time? Right? Okay.

Greg: [03:02](#) Yeah, one more time.

Connor: [03:04](#) I'm Connor James. I'm from that Mattoon, Illinois.

Greg: [03:07](#) Perfect. Um, one thing I actually forgot to mention before we started, with the questions, if you can try to put the question in the answer. So like what's your favorite color? So instead of just saying blue, say my favorite color, is blue.

Connor: [03:23](#) But the name was fine?

Greg: [03:25](#) Yeah, you're good. What did you study at SIU?

Connor: [03:28](#) I studied exercise science as my undergraduate degree and then as my master's degree went through the sports administration program at SIU.

Greg: [03:36](#) Why did you choose to study those two?

Connor: [03:39](#) Well, exercise science was by kind of just, they forced me to pick something and I was interested obviously in training

and the science of movement and you know, it was a big component of being a student athlete - 'Hey, how can I get, can I learn about something that would make me better on the field?' That was kind of like, 'Oh, okay, I'll do that.' So I ended up doing exercise science and then sports administration. I think at the time I still had eligibility left, so I was moving on to start my graduate degree and really just looked at at athletics as a potential option, option for me to pursue. And so yeah, I made the decision to go into sports administration at that time.

Greg: [04:24](#) Cool. So let's, let's start all the way from the beginning. Um, how'd you get involved in sports from, I guess, I'm guessing when you were a kid?

Connor: [04:34](#) I got involved in sports, I think it was just kind of what you did and uh, I had a lot of energy as a, as a kid and I think for my parents it was like, 'Oh, he, he needs to go run some of this, you know, energy off. Um, so played basketball, baseball, soccer, um, obviously football, you know, when, when I got to that age, um, all sorts of sports that you could play. You know, we had a school wide kind of track meets, if you will, but that did not really attract me. Like just kind of a competition. I, just remember from being a young kid,

just being involved on a team was kind of what you did in my hometown and, and, and was something that was good for, um, me as a young person that had a lot of energy. My parents were glad to send me to practice.

Greg: [05:31](#) Um, were you heavily supported to pursue sports other than just killing off that energy? Were your parents heavily involved with your athletic career?

Connor: [05:39](#) I don't ever feel like they said you will, you know, you will play sports. Um, I think that the choice, we all did, but it never felt like, 'Hey, you're going to play this sport this year.' Uh, so I think I, I appreciate it. As I look back, I appreciate it and admire that. Um, but from a support standpoint, once we made a decision, there's two things that really stick out. Um, you know, my mom, my dad was gone a lot. He traveled a lot. I don't know. You could probably count on, I know for a fact I can count on one hand, uh, the, the, it's less than three, the amount of high school or college football games that my mom missed. So she support wise, just an incredible, my, my mom, my, my grandparents, uh, my dad was actually passed away at that point. But from a support standpoint, yeah, I was, I was, I had a lot of love and support.

- Greg: [06:38](#) Going off the note about your dad, from his passing did that inspire you to continue sports for him?
- Connor: [06:48](#) Yeah. When my dad passed away, um, a lot of things, he's passed away suddenly when I was 13 years old. Um, so I was going into eighth grade of football. Uh, he loved watching me play football. I think out of all the sports, he was a big baseball guy growing up. But, uh, to answer your question, if it inspired me, I think I always felt like I was playing for him a little bit and it did drive me, uh, in football. I know it did. I, I think there was, especially through high school, like I was just driven to do really well and to keep working really hard because I felt like that was what he would've wanted me to do. And I felt like, uh, I, in a way I was making them proud by, by continuing to develop in, into, um, uh, hopefully a good, a good player.
- Greg: [07:40](#) Awesome. Let's see. Going from high school to college, were you heavily recruited to play football?
- Connor: [07:49](#) As far as recruitment? I think this is something where I was really fortunate. You talked about support earlier. So was I heavily recruited? I would say moderately recruited. Um, and that was by D2and division, you know, FCS schools. But also I had a friend of mine that we were both, it was a

goal. We wanted to play college football and we wanted to earn a scholarship. And the summer before our senior year, we weren't on vacation. Like are you, talked about support, we talk about all the time. Our parents, I bet you they drove us thousands of thousands of miles that summer because we went to a one day combines, we went to one day camps, we went to, we mapped out the schools that we thought we might have a chance at and then the schools that may be showed any sort of interest in us. And we had to decide, this week, it was every weekend we were driving to, we drove as far as eight to 10 hours away to a one day Nike combine. Uh, we drove, I think there was five or six states we drove to. Um, so it was, uh, it was, it was work. It wasn't a vacation that summer. We were working in trying to earn that scholarship. So that created some exposure. Uh, I can say that, that, that is what led to me earning eventually earning a scholarship to play football, uh, here at SIU. Um, and then it increased interest at other institutions. So I did have some other offers, uh, division one FCS, but no FBS offers or at the time, yeah, I think it was Division 1 A and 1 AA. But, um, yeah. It was really just a grind to work hard and try to earn the attention from schools.

- Greg: [09:33](#) Cool. I love that. Um, at what point did you feel like you, you were good enough to play at the Division 1 level?
- Connor: [09:44](#) Probably that, that June my junior year. Um, yeah, junior year of high school football, we played against the eventual, uh, state champions, Normal Community High School, and they were a class above. So the, the class that I, we were in, we were five A, so we played teams that were a lot bigger than us and had a lot more resources than us. And I had a really good game. Uh, their coach came up to me at the end and basically said, you know, you're one of the best linebackers in our league. And, and it just gave me a lot of confidence. And it was at that time that I was like, you know what, I, I, I can, I know I could play at a high level. And I even knew, yeah, I didn't limit myself to say I'm only going to play at a certain level. Uh, that was when I started to focus on, uh, if there's a good fit, uh, scholarship or not, I want to find a way to, to, to play there. So....
- Greg: [10:42](#) Awesome. Um, if you could just give like a general statement, like were you a linebacker back?
- Connor: [10:57](#) Yeah.
- Greg: [10:57](#) So how you were a linebacker here for Southern Illinois University football team.

- Connor: [11:02](#) Yeah, yeah. I was, uh, a linebacker here from 2007 to 2011. Um, so I, I had a variety of different coaching staffs while I was here. Coach Kill recruited me. Uh, we were very successful in '07, '08, and '09. Then we had some, some competitive years in '10 and '11. Uh, '11 would have been my senior year.
- Greg: [11:39](#) Um, brag about yourself a little bit and talk about some of your accolades and maybe some of your proudest moments.
- Connor: [11:52](#) Brag about myself. Huh? Greg? Um, I think it would just be, one of the, one of the things that I think Coach Kill and that staff told me why they recruited me is because I played the game with passion and they said it showed up on film. Uh, I'm just somebody that I love the game of football. I love what it can do for you, uh, as a person and what it teaches you. And so if you, if you were going to force me to brag on myself, I, I would hope that um, coaches that coached me and uh, people that watch me play would agree that, you know, you can tell by the way that guy plays that he loves the game. And then also my preparation. Uh, I was a big, control the things you can control, which is your attitude and your effort, and you can put a lot of effort into how you prepare and you can continually get better at how

you prepare. So, um, I would just say those two things, you know, the attitude and effort, that was something that I always wanted to focus on. Yeah, I'm gonna miss a tackle here or there. I might drop an interception, but if I can continually just control those things, pre preparation in the weight room, how I eat, what I, what I, you know, all of that. I think that that was a big piece of it.

Greg: [13:18](#) So, uh, and where would you say that that fire comes from? You say control the things that you can control. Where do you think that mindset came from?

Connor: [13:28](#) We are all, we're, where do I think that mindset came from? We are all a product of something. Uh, and I would say that for me, I'm a product of my family. Uh, my parents, uh, just the, the, the kind of the character traits that they lived out, and I got to see them live out. The coaches. I had, uh, the list of coaches from all different sports that I had in my hometown community of Mattoon, um, just some special people and they, they cared. I look back at a fifth grade volunteer football coach and they cared a lot and it meant something to them. And it's just those little people, uh, obviously along the way. There's tons of them, a whole list of them. But I would say that's where, where that comes

from is just, like I said, we're, we're a product of, we're all a product of something. I'm a product of my community, my family, my teammates, and all those coaches that I had.

Greg: [14:32](#) Awesome. Very well said. Um, how would you describe your experience as a student athlete?

Connor: [14:38](#) I'm going to get a quick drink. Sorry.

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Greg: [00:00](#) How would you describe your, your experience as a student athlete?

Connor: [00:14](#) At SIU or just, yeah. I would describe my experience as a student athlete at SIU as, um, I think just community. I think community, togetherness. I'm still here and just the relationships that I've been able to, to cultivate the growth I've been able to experience. Uh, those are some things that come to mind. Just growth, uh, community relationships and yeah. I've just, um, developed, it's been over 12 years ago that I stepped foot on this campus and I'm a completely different person, uh, in all different areas, obviously, um, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, um, all those phases because of this community and the institution and the coaches and the people. Um, I'm just completely different now and for the better. I would hope on most days

for the better, uh, that, that would be kind of how I would describe my experience. Just lifelong relationships that you really can't; I had a six, six SIU teammates stand up with me at my wedding, and I also had four or five guys, maybe even more from my hometown that were in my wedding. So it just shows you that I have lifelong relationships from both places that I've spent the vast majority of my life.

Greg: [01:38](#) That's awesome. Um, and kinda elaborate on that. You say you're, you're much different now throughout that time. Uh, talk about that transition cause of course for four or five of those years, you, you're an athlete and now you're in a full time position. So kinda talk about that transition.

Connor: [01:55](#) That's a lot. Yeah. The transition from, from athlete to professional world then? Yeah. I would say transition from how, let me ask you to re-ask it.

Greg: [02:14](#) Yeah. So if you can perhaps describe that transition from student athlete role to professional world.

Connor: [02:22](#) Yeah. From, from student athlete, the transition from student athlete to the professional world is, is not an easy one. I don't think. I think, um, students, student athletes, and part of the reason that I'm back into the, in, in athletics, you're so focused and you're so committed and you're so

invested in being a student athlete; you're focused on your grades, you're focused on, you know, getting better on the field, that sometimes you don't, um, you don't think about that next chapter and that next phase. And so for me, I, I came here, like I said; think about this, from the most, probably the most traumatic event I'll ever experience happened just five, six years before I got to SIU. So I'm a freshman. I'm displaced from my community. Um, I'm wishing that my dad would be able to come watch me play college football and I had to grow up. I made mistakes. Uh, I think that what was really important is that I talked about those good people, good people around me, um, from all different phases of life. But growth just takes place just by being committed and wanting to grow. So as a student athlete, I think I went through progression of, I have no idea what I want to do most, the vast majority of the time I was a student athlete. I was not focused on what's the next phase look like. I wasn't worried about it, which could be a good thing. I think you're not concerned about it, but I would say I drifted in that area thinking professionally, I was drifting. People wouldn't have said that about my approach to academics and my approach to, to being an

athlete. I was not drifting. I was very focused and I was locked in on getting better. But if I was trying to say this five years, how's it going to relate to the next 50 60, 70 God willing, I was, I wasn't focused on that. I was drifting. So that transition was tough. I was very fortunate and blessed because of relationships. Uh, when I finished my, you know, even getting my masters degree opportunity, I was a graduate assistant. So even getting that, it was all relationship based. I think people looked at every, every stop along the way professionally has, there's been a relationship piece to it. So somebody has known my character or they've known, uh, you know, they've done a reference check essentially. And um, like I said, I don't get it right all the time, but at this point, every job that I've had has been, you know, can you trust him? Can, can he do, is he going to work hard? Some of those same attributes, you know, if I link it back to my being a student athlete that I did really well when I was focused on the athletic experience, uh, I think I've come through a little bit professionally. Um, and hey, you know, this is a, this is a hopefully a safe, a safe play. Um, and I think professionally, eventually it just, people gave me

opportunities. Yeah, that was kind of a rant, but that's a, that's a big one to unpack.

Greg: [05:43](#) Uh, I like, what you said as a student athlete, you were very focused on the present and not so much, you know, cause you, you did lock down, you did well athletically. So when the athletics and even the student part kind of came to an end, was there a little bit of an uh-oh moment? Like, cause even though you did well in those, those fields, like now it's kinda time to implement it.

Connor: [06:10](#) When when the student athlete part came to an end, I was, I was, there was some piece kind of in my soul and my body was at a point in my mind that I knew I didn't want to pursue. I didn't want to pursue playing at the next level. I, so I think that was, that was a positive for me that I, I had peace at closing the, the student athlete chapter. I wasn't, I wasn't uh, overwhelmed or anxious about the next step. It was kinda like, all right, well the next step is you get a job. And I was very fortunate, and I got a really good job with the American Cancer Society. That was my first job. It didn't link to, you know, exercise science or sports administration. But relationships were in play and I was able to get an opportunity.

- Greg: [07:05](#) Yeah. Uh, you said your body, was that the sole reason that you're kinda okay with student athlete coming to an end or were there other reasons why you're kind of just felt like you were ready to be done?
- Connor: [07:18](#) Well, so when I say I was ready to be done, I think I knew my eligibility was up and, and I'm an all in type person and I knew that if I was going to pursue playing at the next level, one, I would physically have to, to reach a level that I'd never been to, to go all in and pursue that. And then two, it would prolong that next step as far as professionally because I knew that would be a six month, could be even a longer process. Um, so yeah. What, what was your question again?
- Greg: [07:59](#) Yeah, it was kind of, I guess what I'm trying to feel out here is what kind of emotions did you have when you know, come that last home football game, come graduation, was there joy that like, cause some athletes are happy, no longer have to do the long workouts and practices, others are sad because now that identity is kind of pushed aside and you got to become someone else.
- Connor: [08:22](#) Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I, I wasn't sad. I wasn't, I, I wasn't sad or hold on, let me go back though. Cause what you

said, I want him to distinct between two and I'm, I'm kinda cold. That's why I'm like shivering a little bit, but yeah, no, we're all right. We're good. Um, one more time on that.

Greg: 08:48 Yeah. So I guess for more straight forward statement, just describe your, how you felt, your emotions when that last home football game happened.

Connor: 08:58 Yeah. The, the last, the last home football game, obviously it was senior day and then it was a special day. It was a blackout cancer day. Uh, the first one that, that was ever started here. So that was a neat special, experience. I got to, you know, obviously walk out with my mom on senior day. So I think the, the feeling was I, I'm blessed. I really think that's what it was. You know, there wasn't fear about the future, but it was like, man, if I think about the guys I've played with, the support staff that have been involved, the coaches that have coached me, the people I've met at the institution, it just, it was a time of reflection. I think. I, I sat, you know, we had a game, I think the game was in the evening and I sat out in the stadium out here and I just kind of reflected on, wow, like I've come a long way, uh, in, in four or five years. And so that, that's what it was. There wasn't any part of me that was excited to be done. I want to

say, I want to make that clear. Like I was not excited to play the game because, because I love the game. I love the game of football and there's nothing like it. And, you know, I was able to coach high school football, but I still, as a player, you only get so many opportunities. And, um, I wasn't excited to be done, but I do think I was able to find just a gratitude for the people, the support, uh, and all the people that, that had kind of helped me get to that point. And, um, have, have a really enjoyable, um, like life shaping experience as a student athlete.

Greg: [10:39](#)

Perfect. Uh, let's see here.

Audio File: 002_191216

Greg: [00:11](#)

So let's, let's kinda stay on the, uh, you don't, with school now going into professional world, what would you say are some of the things that kind of helped you with that transition of really, a transition of an identity from being a student athlete to now being a professional.

Connor: [00:29](#)

Yeah. Transitioning from being a student athlete to being professional. The things that helped me with that, just a commitment to personal development, I think is one, uh....reading. So I started reading at the time, you know, leisure reading when I was in college. And I think that I, I

came across a few books that I was like, wow, you know, like, this is, it took me forever to read them, but they changed me and they, I, there's little pieces of those books that, that stuck with me as I made that transition in the professional world. And so I would say that kind of continual growth, uh, surrounding yourself with great people. What are you feeding kind of feeding your soul? I think those are some of the things that, uh, that really helped me when I moved on the professional world.

Greg: [01:23](#) And how important would you say it is to try new things in order to make that transition easily?

Connor: [01:30](#) What type of things? Like?

Greg: [01:36](#) Maybe, maybe traveling somewhere new, trying a new hobby. Say you've never tried fishing before, you know, like things, little things to kind of put yourself in a new world other than all you're focused on is football.

Connor: [01:49](#) Yeah. Yeah. So ,so trying new things, trying new things and how, and how it relates to the professional world is, you've got to fight fear and, and I think that, um, for me I've always been pretty open to new things as far as traveling. If you look at my career path, it's been a combination of things that may not look like since on paper. And so I

haven't been afraid to try new things even professionally because I think at the end of the day, if, if who you are and your character is, is who, you know, a constant is something, an area you're continuing to try to develop, you're going to be alright. Opening yourself up to new things and the professional you gotta be comfortable with being uncomfortable. And I think the student athlete experience teaches you that, but in the professional world, and an example for me would be, uh, you know, I, I worked in development, uh, which development for nonprofit, so for American Cancer Society, so fundraising, and then I completely transition out of that business sector in that career path into financial services. And people are like, how does that even, you know, I didn't have an MBA, MBA, I didn't have a business background, but I made that transition. Uh, I, I had a lot of support. Again, I had people I talked to that did research, asked them about the, the things that they liked and didn't like. Um, I, I had a support mechanism and um, my family and my fiancé, girlfriend, wife, all through all these things. And, and so I think that those are the things that helped me make transitions and, uh, really explore and try new things is number one. Get

people's insights on their experience in something similar.

And then to, uh, just have a confidence and knowing that you got people around you that are going to pick you up if you make a mistake.

Greg: [04:39](#) Um, let's talk about where you're at currently. Uh, so again, as you can just kind of give a statement of, you know, so-and-so at SIU and this is what I do. So you just have to like kind of give your title.

Connor: [04:55](#) I'm Connor James. I work in SIU athletics as an academic and career development coordinator. Um, I get the opportunity to, to track and monitor and really just serve our student athletes on their academic journey. And then the career piece is trying to help them navigate that transition, trying to help them gain exposure to the gifts that they've been given, uh, earlier in their time as a student athlete. So maybe they can narrow in on majors and degrees that helped them, uh, really make that transition a little bit smoother when they get to the awesome day, which is graduation day.

Greg: [05:32](#) Perfect. Are there characteristics or qualities that come with being a student athlete that you like to emphasize when telling your students now that they can carry over to the

professional world? The workforce. So for example, like student athletes, everyone knows student athletes work hard. That's something that they can go off of.

Connor: 05:55 Yeah, there's some constants with, with student athletes that one of the ones that I undervalued and I think sometimes student athletes they forget is they, they're in this big group of people from all over the country, all over the world. Diversity. Uh, there, there are a lot of other people that may not get to experience or didn't grow up with that. Some do, but, um, a lot of them to be in a locker room or to be in the, in the academic center with, there's somebody that speaks three languages and they grew up in an impoverished area and you know, to know that you have a relationship with that person and to, to seek understanding. And I think that's, that's a, an area that student athletes kind of gain exposure to through that experience.

Greg: 06:51 Yeah, uh, that was good. So you would say like being able to, um, like teamwork and work within their, like a diversified groups that you're saying. Gotcha. Um, let's see, what is, uh, something you like to tell the student athletes now if maybe they're feeling lost, like they come to you and like, 'Hey, I have no idea, even though I'm in a major, I

have no idea what's, what's the kind of, I don't know what I want to do.

Connor:

07:20

Yeah. Yeah. I, I think you've heard, heard me say, so if, if a student athlete comes to me now and they're concerned about the future, we just try to talk through it and we try to, it can be a real, you know, we don't want to suppress it or not acknowledge fear or anxiousness or whatever it may be about the future, but sometimes it's just helpful to like get it on paper and I think they forget what are, what are you good at? Okay. And then what are you interested in? And then have we spoke to anybody that's in the roles that we think we might want to do. Just trying to help really simplify and provide clarity. I think clarity is a beautiful thing, but it can, we, can we provide just one answer, one of those questions that helps them, uh, navigate, okay, maybe this is where I want to go. And then also, you know, Greg, I think that I also want them to know like, we are all a work in progress. Things are so different now. Uh, there wasn't like a whole lot of social media out there when it was just kind of starting when I was graduating. And I think there's this tendency to look at other people's lives. And I just had this happen in the past few years with a student

athlete that I was mentoring, you know, looking at my guy that I graduated with and he's got this big job and there's this tendency to, to think that they have it when he may not even be fulfilled, that may not even be where he ends up. He made transition out of that role in six months. So I think there's a really, um, if you're going to sit down and talk with me, I'm going to say we can, we can't focus on all this out here. We've got to focus on us. And that goes back to the who you are is really, really important, not always what you do and how you go about things and your approach. Um, those are the things that I want to always come back to and, and I feel like, um, just based on the things that I've read and the mentors that I've had and where they've gone, um, that's going to be somewhat of a timeless, uh, strategy. I don't even want to call it a strategy, but that's going to be somewhat of a timeless, um, just I guess advice that I'll give.

Greg:

09:35

Cool. Perfect. Kind of going back onto now, um, you've been a student athlete, you've had various professional jobs. Um, so ultimately what, what do you want to be known for? Is it football? Something other than football? A combination of things?

- Connor: [10:00](#) Yeah. I want to be known for just, I'm an encourager. I want people to always feel encouraged. I think that's a, through, through a process of kind of self-discovery for me. Um, I found that, that, that, is it a gift that others have kind of shared with me? Is it, man, you're just encouraging. And so I want to just continue to provide that for the people I'm surrounded by and, and with. And, um, I am, my, my faith is a huge part of my foundation. And so, um, just kinda modeling the characters of, of Christ is a, is a big thing for me. And, um, bringing joy and generosity and encouraging others would be the things that I would hope student athletes and people that work with me would, would remember me by or, or, yeah.
- Greg: [10:52](#) Cool. Wrapping up here, um, this is something that I've been done with everybody. So my vision for kind of like the conclusion of this is that, uh, it's about athletic identity. So I've had everyone say their name and then three things they are and then end it by saying I am more than an athlete. So like for example, I would say I'm Greg Camillone I'm a videographer, traveler, animal lover, and I'm more than an athlete
- Connor: [11:31](#) Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

- Greg: [11:41](#) Yeah, Think about it. Don't rush it out.
- Connor: [11:48](#) Yeah. Yeah. Cool. Um, I'm Connor James. I'm a Christ follower. I'm a husband. I'm a servant. I'm more than an athlete.
- Greg: [12:22](#) Perfect. Cool. Um, let's see. I guess we, we've touched on this, but just if there's other points you want to hit with it, um, if a student athlete is feeling lost with their identity, perhaps maybe just spit out a piece of advice that you'd like.
- Connor: [12:45](#) Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Greg: [12:50](#) And if that, if you get trouble thinking of something like that, maybe since you were a student athlete as well, um, how do you use your experiences to help now student athletes?
- Connor: [13:05](#) If a student athlete is lost with their identity, if they're struggling, I think, let me see, hold on, go back. My advice to a student athlete that is struggling with identity is take, take time to evaluate what do you, what are you kind of feeding your heart and your soul? Who are you surrounded by? That's so important. What, what, what people are you spending time? What people are you watching on your social media channels? Um, those, those things are, are

really important. And then as it relates professionally, it's the same thing. Uh, you will become those people that you're, you're spending time with and the people that are successful, they'll tell you and, and success. And how do you define success too? That's a whole other caveat of what are you defining success. And so it's really pause. I think it's pause. If a student athlete is kinda struggling with identity or just feeling a little bit lost. Let's hit the pause button here. Hold on a second. Who do others say that you are, uh, what's your, what's your spiritual foundation and, and you know, obviously with respect to that, what is that? I think you have to have to have clarity on what do you value, what do you believe in? So when you hit that pause, it's really a time to go, but who am I? And evaluate that introspection a little bit. And you can do that with a support group. So if you have friends and family, um, get their opinion, get people that you spend time with, you know, what are the things that I'm good at? And, uh, those would be, the things are with that pause, is really just taking time to evaluate, you know, who am I, what, what have I shown to be true in the past? And then where do I want to go? I think reflection is key.

Audio File: 003_191216

Connor: [00:00](#) I think, I think just trying to get clarity and simplify that.

Greg: [00:04](#) Okay, cool. Um, those are all the questions I have. Uh, I always like to end the interviews by giving the interviewee the floor, you know. Any additional comments you want to add? Um, maybe something that I may have missed that you, that's been on your mind. The floor is yours.

Connor: [00:23](#) Well, I've got things I just, I'm just trying to think concisely. So there's this, there's this front door, back door approach and I think as long as academic support services or just support services in athletics, as long as we're curious and focused on the back door, that's what I get really excited about. And not just while they're, you know, in this kind of box here and in this four or five year window, but really what are they like out the back door and then even taking it to the next phase is how are we supporting them beyond the back door? Those are the things that I'm really curious about and we'd be excited about for the future of me. Kind of why transitioned back into athletics. The key to me, the key for student athletes continue to be, um, great leaders in the professional world is skilled development. We've, we have to help them develop skills and that can, that, that

includes social awareness and understanding themselves. Uh, mental illness. We kind of talked about a little bit off mic, a big deal. Um, it's real and the struggle is real. The pressure is real. Um, there's all of these things outside of athletics that are going to continue to make it harder I think. Uh, but there are people committed to make it easier and, and as long as those people are curious about, um, helping them develop skills and how can we enhance them and enrich them beyond their time and support them even beyond graduation day. To me that's, that's really important and I think that's, that would be a factor of helping mitigate this struggle as of student athlete identity and as they make that transition because it's real. We all have teammates that, um, they struggle, especially when things don't work out the way that we thought they were going to work out. That's when, if you don't have that support network, if you haven't had a coach speak into your life, it can be really hard. You can feel more and more isolated than you've ever been. So kind of rambled there.

Greg:

07:12

It's true. If you know, some people are so straight forward on going pro and they feel like if they don't think about anything else other than that, then they're not fully

committed to the idea of going pro or whatever. You know, it's the same thing if your, your mindset was to maybe be an engineer and you know, get accepted into that program now. Like it's, it's similar in a spec that you have something in mind and it gets taken away from, you. There's an uh oh moment.

Connor:

07:44

That's the other side of it, right? Some people are very, uh, I, I was drifting. I really wasn't focused on the, where am I going to go professionally? Some people are so laser focused and have their plan so mapped out that if it doesn't work out, then that, that perceived identity is stripped from them. And that again, that's where being a student athlete, there's had to have been a time where you've encountered something that didn't go your way. And that's where I, I do think that student athletes need to be reminded, like, you can do this. Like, you've look what you overcame. Like, look what you endured. For me, my senior season, we lost, uh, five straight games by eight points or less. That taught me a lot because I was working as hard as I could, but I wasn't getting the results that I wanted my team with. So little things like that, if you can, um, use those experiences and kind of understand how they would in the future, just

kind of cross relate them to professionally how, Oh yeah, I can do this or I've overcome this before. And then for me, the other biggest piece was just obviously like perspective of one day I woke up the next day and my dad had a heart attack and passed away that, that perspective stuck with me through that transition as well. So, um, yeah. So I know, again, I'm kind of all over, but yeah. Yeah.

Greg: [09:26](#)

No, you're fine. You're right.

Connor: [10:46](#)

Yeah. Yeah. So there's something just came to mind. So you asked earlier, um, my advice to somebody that's struggling with identity or professional identity, right? Or just either or? Yeah. So first student athlete that is struggling with identity or the next step professionally. One of the first things I do, and I read this in a book, so I can't take credit. Um, as I pull out, I have five or six different business cards from the five or six different things that I've done in a matter of, um, you know, less than 10 years that I've graduated. And now some might say, you know, how have you driven, I've learned so much and I, I kinda tell him, here's where I made a mistake there and here's why I did that. And I do that too, just to show them not that, Hey, I, I'm, what are, what are the, what are the, the things

that, the transitions that they've overcome. And then look, there's all these examples out there of business people in the professional world that you need to just study them and understand the different things, the mistakes that they made and how they overcame them. Um, even just someone locally here haven't sit down and talking with them for it took him 29 times. He got rejected by a bank to get a loan to start his business. And now he's extremely successful. So just having those conversations and, and what's your understanding of failure, failure and, and how people overcome it and adjust and adapt to it. Uh, that's always going to be, you know, in conjunction with those things that I said earlier. I think, Hey, you can do this type thing. I think I'm good, man. I don't know what else, I'm trying to think of if there's any other examples.

Connor:

12:45

Um, yeah, yeah. Well, I've got one other thing I think. At the end of the day, not the end of the day. I, when it comes down to it beyond, beyond the student athlete experience, I think we should all be more focused on you, you're gonna, going to be a husband or you're going to be a wife or a parent maybe someday. Um, you're, you're going to be a colleague. And the whole goal should be to help a student

athlete develop skills that helps them be a better version of that when they're in that role. And that's going to be a lot longer than the four or five years that they're a student athlete. So really, uh, that's why we should be all in and there should be a ton of support staff that are helping them develop them at that time.

Greg: [14:07](#) Yeah, you're right because there's so many skills that carry over from being a student athlete that can be applied to the professional work world. So again, you have the hard work. The working with a diversified group, you know, time management is a huge thing. When you're a student athlete, you have so much of your day scheduled out for you, which is between workouts, class and practice. So I think, you know, I don't think student athletes should feel like they're at a disadvantage cause like, oh, well I've been a student athlete for the last four years, I'm not sure how to really sell myself. And really that can be a selling point.

Connor: [14:46](#) It can, but that's why I'm really focused on the skill development too, because that's what employers want. So there's a book, um, called There is Life After College written by Jeffrey Selingo. I read that about a year ago. And that gap is huge. Between what graduates think they're

good at, and what employers say they're actually good at. Employers want skills applicable to their work environment. And so for a student athlete it's hard because you can't go into a work place for 3 to 6 months. The primary focus is being on the court or field competing. And that's why I think if we can find creative ways, it's happening at other institutions across the country, finding creative ways to help develop skills, professional skills. The character traits, leadership, teamwork, community, inclusiveness, all of that happens as a student athlete. But developing professional skills is going to be one of the key ingredients to navigating the transition of athlete to professional out into the world.

JULIE PARTRIDGE TRANSCRIPT

Audio File: 000_191028

- Greg: 00:00 Um, typically we try to like incorporate the question in the answer. So if I say, what's your favorite color, you'd say my favorite color is. Um, that's pretty much it. Of course, you know, you're welcome to skip through questions or redo questions, whatever. Okay. Um, so we will get started, I'm going to do a clap. Alright, so first just start off by stating your name and your title here at SIU.
- Julie: 07:58 Uh, so my name is Julie Partridge and I'm a professor of sport and exercise psychology. And I'm also the faculty athletics representative for SIU.
- Greg: 08:06 Perfect. Um, and could you just discuss a little bit what those roles entail? Your day to day?
- Julie: 08:13 So my roles as faculty member, of course I'm involved with teaching classes in sport and exercise psychology, um, both at the graduate and undergraduate levels. Um, I do research. So my research focuses typically, um, a couple of lines that I have. One is, uh, tied to self conscious emotions, so shame primarily, um, and in sport and physical activity. Um, and then I also have an interest in, uh, social influence in sports. So the impact of peers,

parents, coaches, um, siblings, um, in sport. And then the faculty athletic rep, um, you know, position is one that, there's somebody at every NCAA member institution who serves as a faculty athletics representative. And that that role involves sort of serving as a conduit between athletics and the academic side of campus, especially with upper administration, uh, to provide a, um, another layer of, uh, I guess accountability or oversight over athletics from some, somebody on this side of campus. Um, and then I personally think the part that's probably more important to me, uh, is that it's another, um, component of, um, of like student athlete welfare. Um, so there's somebody else that's kind of paying attention to that as well. And since it really ties in nicely with what I spend my career doing, it's been a nice, uh, a nice match for me.

Greg: 09:39 Gotcha. Is that how you got into the faculty athletic representative role or?

Julie: 09:44 Um, sort of. I, I was actually when, Dr. Bardo was the previous, um, faculty athletics rep and he had been in that role for I think 13 or 14 years. Um, he was an athlete here himself. He's kind of a legend. Um, so when he was retiring, um, I got a phone call, um, you know, asking if I

had an interest in it. Um, and so I kind of took on that role in an interim, for as an interim person, um, for a couple of months and then there was a, um, an application process.

Um, and so it was good cause I was, it gave me the opportunity to kind of take some time to see if it was something that would be a good fit. Um, and then when I realized, yeah, this is something that I would like to keep doing, then I applied for it. And, um, this is the, um, I think the fifth or maybe started the sixth year that I've been doing it, which is kinda crazy. So, yeah.

Greg: [10:36](#) Awesome. Cool. Um, what would you say, both sides of teaching and athletics, um, what are you most passionate about with those roles?

Julie: [10:46](#) Yeah, so I think one of the things that I really, really enjoy is, um, I mean I've always enjoyed teaching. Um, when I first started in sports psych, I thought that's all I wanted to do was just work with athletes. Like that was my intent when I went to graduate school. Um, and then I pretty quickly realized that I actually really liked the teaching role. So, um, I always enjoy, um, teaching both the undergraduate and graduate classes. Um, on the graduate side we have so many, um, so many people in those classes

that are, uh, filling a lot of different roles or want to do different things in athletics. So, you know, we have people who are working as coaches, people in strength and conditioning, people in athletic training, people who want to go on into, you know, marketing, that type of thing. Um, to me there's always a connection with sport and exercise psych. So I like the opportunity to talk to people who are going to be working in the field about the importance of understanding some of the psychological characteristics, um, or factors that are going to impact the student athletes that they work with. Um, so that part I always really enjoy, um, I do enjoy doing research as well. But I think, um, you know, at this point I'm able to do kind of what I really want to with that. I'm a full professor now, so I get to really focus on the things that I really want to study, um, which is nice. And then on the faculty athletic rep side, I think one of the nicest things is that I get a chance to really know a lot more of the athletes than I did before. Um, you know, I'm in, um, I'm in the department of kinesiology, so we actually have quite a few student athletes who are our majors. Um, and then, you know, I meet with athletes sometimes, but, um, it's just been the opportunity to get to know them a little bit

better, um, and to understand what some of the unique issues are that they face.

Greg: [12:39](#) Awesome. Um, could you talk a little bit about more of, now that you mentioned that you get to meet more of the athletes through this role, how do you develop a relationship with those athletes?

Julie: [12:51](#) Yeah, so I think the opportunity to make relationships with the athletes, I think centers around the same thing that it does for anybody else. I think with people is going to sound very cliché, but if people know that you care about getting to know them, that it makes it much easier to get to know them. Um, and so one of the things that, um, I've tried to do, you know, my husband is in the same department. Um, and one of the things that we try to do is to attend as many sporting events as we possibly can. Um, you know, it's obviously we, we really do love almost every sport, certainly all of the ones we have here, but like we watch a lot of sports at home. Um, and so it's always fun to go and watch people that, you know, compete in the sport. And so that to me, I think is one of the things that's been most important is to just be visible so that the student athletes know that it's not, you know, it's, I'm not just going to

men's basketball or football, which are the, you know, sports that maybe people think of as being more visible. But, um, we really try every year if at all possible to go to at least one event from every single team. Um, and some of them we try to go to as many as we possibly can. You know, some don't have as many, so like, but we made it to the, to the one, um, cross country meet this year. We always try to make it to, um, you know, home golf, uh, for men's and women's. Um, but yeah, I think being visible, checking in on athletes, um, if somebody has done something really, you know, impressive, like as a, uh, an athlete of the week for the MVC or something like that, I always try to send something to just say, 'Hey, congrats. I saw that. That's great.' So that's been probably the, the easiest way to kind of do that is just to make sure people know that, that you see the things that they're doing and that you're, that you're making sure you're staying up on that. Yeah.

Greg: [14:45](#) Cool. I love that.

Audio File: 001_191028

Greg: [00:00](#) Uh, let's see, um, going on to the athlete side, kind of from your experiences, um, how have you noticed how athletes measure their success?

Julie:

00:18

That's a really good question. So I feel like, you know, athletes measure their success in a lot of different ways. I think, um, my experience has tended to be that when athletes come into college, um, again, this is, this probably sounds a little cliché, but you know, most of them have come in to being in a division one athletic program because they've been the best at their school or their best on their club team. And so when they come in, I, I don't know that the expectations always are the same when they come in is when they leave. Um, I, I don't think they are for everybody. Um, so I think for a lot of people it's, sometimes it does shift, you know, from, okay, these are the goals that I have. Um, and they may be very outcome driven. Um, and I think that for some people, the longer they're here, the more they realize, okay, this really is about getting a wealth of experiences. Um, or this is maybe about me, um, becoming like the best player that I can be and it's maybe not going to look the same way that I thought it was going to when I came in. Um, you know, for some people I think the goals become more social. Um, in terms of like having good experience with their teammates, being a leader to their teammates, um, getting the opportunity to, um, be part

of something that's bigger than them. Um, so I think it's really different for, for everybody. But I think, I think maybe the one thing that's consistent is that it probably shifts a little bit. Um, I don't think, I think it would be probably pretty rare that it's a straight line from where they think that it was gonna go to where they end up.

Greg: [01:56](#) Um, and with that would you say there's often like a, a culture shock from that transition from high school to college?

Julie: [02:03](#) Yeah, I think the culture shock when people come in, uh, is it can be really profound. And I think that's true of any freshman who comes in, let alone somebody who's coming into a situation where they're not only expected to perform academically, but then they're expected to perform on the court or in the pool or you know, uh, on the golf course or whatever. And so I think, yeah, it is a big shock for people. Um, competitively I think it's a big shock for people. Again, academically, sometimes, not always, but sometimes, um, socially it is certainly a shock. Um, and I think it's also, um, a big change. Even things like just the length of the season. Um, and something that I've noticed over time is that I think sometimes, you know, freshmen in

particular about the time they're kind of hitting the wall. It's when, their high school seasons would've been over and they still have a decent amount of a season. Um, and so trying to kind of figure out how to manage that. Um, obviously then you add new found freedom in there. It's just, it's a very different world. So that transition is not, it's not an easy one. And I think sometimes it's really hard to think back and remember how hard the transition was for anybody and let alone some of the other things that you pile on for, for athletes. It can be pretty, pretty tremendous what that changes.

- Greg: [03:37](#) Why is it, do you think the student athletes withhold such high expectations?
- Julie: [03:43](#) Um, so for themselves?
- Greg: [03:45](#) Yeah.
- Julie: [03:46](#) Okay. So I think a lot of times the expectations for athletes, um, well I, I think it's a few different things. The expectations, uh, first of all are ones that, that, um, most athletes have probably been living with for a long time . So if somebody starts out, um, as an athlete and they have even a little bit of success and then they start to kind of move up the competitive ladder, I think what you start to

see is that there are then more expectations placed on them, which is understandable. Um, but I think, uh, it can be a bit of a double edged sword sometimes for sure. Um, striving for excellence is something that I think most people would agree is a, is a great thing. And that, that's something that we want athletes to do. Um, striving for perfection, however, is sometimes something that, that athletes can engage with as well. And that's a little bit more difficult I think to handle because perfection sounds wonderful, but in reality it's just really can be a really anxiety provoking, um, expectation that we would have for ourselves. And yet I think that's something that we talk to athletes about a lot without talking about the fact that really what we're talking about is again, trying to be the absolute best that you can be. Um, whether we want to put the label perfection on there is probably a different issue. Um, but I think it's something that as an athlete you're taught constantly from, uh, from a pretty young age, especially if you're successful, um, that you're always striving for something more. And again, sometimes that can be a really positive thing and sometimes that can lead to, um, some expectations that are, you know, quite frankly not realistic for anybody to meet.

And so it's trying to find a balance between, again, what am I striving for? Um, improvement in my striving to, um, you know, do everything that I can to maximize my potential, or am I setting a standard for myself that's literally impossible to reach and therefore I'm always gonna fall short. Um, and so I think those two, it's important for us to keep track of which one we're shooting for and find the ways that we can to help people reach the first one and try to de-emphasize the second one. That's tough to do.

Audio File: 002_191028

Greg: [00:06](#) Um, going on to the piece you wrote and you sent me, for those who don't know what that term means, can you just give a definition of what athletic identity is?

Julie: [00:23](#) Sure. So athletic identity is the idea how strongly somebody identifies with the athletic role. So all of us feel many roles in our lives obviously. So you know, you may be a, um, a daughter, a son or a parent or a sibling or a, you know, somebody that's a significant other, um, you know, an employee, whatever it is, you know, for athletes, many times, you know, people start athletics pretty young typically. So, you know, average age I think now is still somewhere around five years of age that most people start,

start participating in sports. Sometimes younger than that. And if you're talking about a college athlete, you're talking about somebody who spent probably three quarters of their life really strongly engaged in the athlete role. And if you look at, at how sports are kind of structured right now, there still is an emphasis on specializing relatively early or really focusing on a sport relatively early. And that's obviously not true for everybody, but for many people that, that identity as an athlete is very strong. And it's something that sometimes forecloses pretty early in terms of this is what I am, I'm an athlete. Um, that's what my entire kind of world revolves around. So, you know, all of my friends are athletes. Everybody that I know identifies me as that. People ask me about how my season is going. Um, it's going to drive the decisions that I make about where I go to school, what I choose to maybe major in or how I'm going to set up the rest of my life. And that's all great. But we want to keep in mind that the, the stronger that identity is and as an athlete, when that is done, we have to know what the next, like, what else is there? And if the only thing that we have is athlete, um, there's always a concern that when that person is done playing, the question becomes now who

am I? And for some people they may not have a really strong sense of that because they have not developed the other parts of their identity that we would want them to be aware of or, or to yeah. To be able to um, know what those mean to them.

Greg: [02:29](#) That was perfect. Great. Um, I feel like it's such like a, like a thing that like it makes sense once you say it out loud, but it's not something considered,

Julie: [02:38](#) Right. Yeah. It's just seen as like this is just normal that you put everything into this. And again, we encourage that type of thing. You know, not everybody, but it's just, you know, what are you doing? The things that people ask about, you know, if, if nobody ever gets asked about anything but their sport, it makes sense that that would be the part of their, how they see themselves because it's reflecting back what other people see them as or what they think other people see them as, you know, so, yeah.

Greg: [03:08](#) Yeah. Um, I mean if there's anything more, you kind of answered it, but I was gonna ask how athletic identity shapes, of course, you know, being involved with it, but maybe elaborate on some of the outside factors as well. Maybe something about the outside looking in?

Julie:

03:20

Sure. Yeah. So athletic identity is, it's so many different aspects of it. Again, it is about obviously just do I play, do I not play a sport? But it is, again, you know, if, if that is the only way that people know you, if that's the only thing that people ever ask you about. So it's never, well, what are you gonna major in, in college or you know, you know, what are you planning to do when you're done playing? And the only questions are ever about the athlete role. It's a really strong, like reflection back to you in terms of like, this is how everybody sees me. So this is who I am. Um, you know, there's, there's a certain amount of influence that other people have on how we see ourselves. And it's of course we all want to believe that we have a really strong sense of ourself and that we, we know who we are as a person. But the bottom line is if, if, if other people don't engage with the other parts of our identity, it's really hard for us to establish that that is important. So those things are all, all important. Obviously, you know, significant others, not just random people but significant others. Like what, what are the conversations that we have with people, um, around us in terms of, you know, again, a parent or a significant other or a sibling. Um, how much does that play

into it? Um, you know, how well do people prepare us to move on from that role? So, you know, athletics is unlike most other forms of our identity where we would expect those to last for much longer. You know, if, if an, if a college athlete leaves the athlete role after college, it's, you know, they're 22, 23 years old and that part now is, is done in a way that is different from say, retiring from a job when you're 65 or 70 or whatever. I mean, that's a huge amount of time that you have just invested into developing this part of yourself that it could be dominating every decision that you're making in your life from again, five through 22 or whatever. And then that's over. Um, and all of a sudden it's done. That can be incredibly jarring for people to realize, Oh, I'm not sure what else I am now. If I'm not an athlete, then who am I? Um, is a refrain that you hear a lot from athletes. Um, and even though they may know that that time is coming, uh, it's very different to experience it. And I think if you ask any college student, they'll talk about how fast their college years went. And to think about it as an athlete, it's the same exact thing. Like you're constantly, everything is very scheduled. So you're kind of going along and all of a sudden it's a senior year and you think, 'Oh, I'm

almost done.' Which in some ways is wonderful. In some ways it's terrifying and somewhere in between. For some people it's, it's along a continuum. Yeah.

Greg: [06:19](#) Oh yeah, absolutely. What do you think, of course, is varies a lot though. Why do you think athletes become so committed to their sport?

Julie: [06:32](#) Yeah, so that's a great question. So athletes, um, I think there's a number of reasons why people get really committed. Um, I think there's obviously what I would hope is that mostly it's because they really just love the sport. Um, that there's something about it that they felt like, um, really connected for them or like fits them really well. Um, of course, uh, you know, if we talk about what motivates people to do something, I usually say in my classes, like we're, we're generally not motivated to do things we suck at. So, you know, like probably there's a lot of it that's just I, that I was good at this from an early age or people encouraged me to do it or they supported my desire to do this. And so I think that that's, you know, one reason why it becomes so, so important. I think for a lot of college athletes it does revolve around the idea of getting a scholarship. Um, and so, you know, that becomes sort of

the, the, um, the Holy grail that's like, okay, I'm going to keep doing this and then I'm going to get rewarded with a scholarship. Um, and then once the scholarship is there, um, sometimes it can be a bit like, 'Oh, I guess I have to keep doing this now.' Um, but, you know, I think for some people it just, everything starts to revolve around that. I think there is a certain amount of, um, investment that goes into it as well, whether that's time, money, um, other opportunities that you don't take, you know, because you're, you're competing or you're doing these things that it can be very hard for people to step away from it as well. Like this is, I've always done this, like I don't even know what else I would do, um, if I weren't doing this. Um, so I think it's a lot of, a lot of different things, but we definitely value sport in this country and we value people being good at athletics. And so if somebody's good from an early age, the chances that they are going to be encouraged to continue, I would say are pretty high. And that it's something that people will recognize them for and that they may be rewarded for in a variety of ways.

Greg:

08:36

What about that commitment would you say causes them to neglect exploring other things?

Julie:

08:45

I think so, the commitment into athletics, and again, it's similar to, you know, if you were, if you're at a high level, you know, performing artists, so you play an instrument or any of those types of things. I think it's a lot of the same kinds of things. But you know, the commitment is I think encouraged by a lot of different factors. Um, you know, at somebody at five, right? So somebody starting a sport at five, I'm not saying it never happens, but I just think typically that is maybe not the, the child themselves is necessarily angling to really commit to it, to a sport. Um, but again, in our society, like in this country, we have, um, a lot of youth sport opportunities for kids now that we didn't used to have. Like in almost every sport, it used to be kind of like there were one or two sports that, that kids could start playing and now you can play almost any sport from a pretty young age. So, you know, you start early. Um, the more that somebody has invested in it, the more there becomes this idea of like, 'Oh, well you, you've been doing this, so we want you to continue doing it. I'm kinda good at it. It's fun. You know, I make friends, we get to travel.' Um, you know, I say sometimes like if you think about like if you've ever played a sport and you traveled, um, it used to

be that that was really fun because it would be like, 'Oh, maybe there's going to be a pool at the hotel that we're going to stay at. Like that just becomes like the goal. Um, and at some point then it starts to become more serious. The more, again, the more I've invested in it, the more it feels like, well I have to kind of stick with this now? Um, and before too long it can be a situation where all of those things that you used to really like have become like, wow, this is just part of the job. Like it's a grind sometimes to travel. Um, I think if you talk to most college athletes, their perspective on traveling now versus what it was like when they were 10 or whatever, it's probably pretty different because now I've, I've invested in it, it's more of a job. Um, it's more of an obligation. Um, but I've put so much into this and this is the thing that I do. Um, and again, it may be it's paying for part of my college. Maybe it's going to help me get where I want to go. Um, but I have to maintain the commitment to this because this is kind of what got me here and I don't know anything else at this point. And that's obviously not true for everybody. But I think for a lot of people it does become like, this is the life that I've been doing since I was six or seven.

- Greg: 11:20 Let's go into the aftermath. What happens to the athletic identity when the athlete's career is over?
- Julie: 11:30 So when, when an athlete's career is over, I think the important thing to remember is that most athletes make the transition successfully. Um, but many times the immediate time right after can be the time when it's, you know, obviously the hardest for people to make that transition. And again, even though we know something is going to come to an end, that doesn't actually necessarily always make it easier because it creeps up on us again. I don't know how many just college students that I know ,that you know, are like, I don't know where these four or five years when it went so quickly. Um, and so it's the same for anybody. Like all of a sudden it feels like, okay, this is done and I'm not exactly sure what to do with my time is the thing that I hear from a lot of athletes. Like I'm going to have all this free time. And sometimes people say it like it's a good thing. And sometimes people say it with just the tiniest bit of like, I don't know how I'm going to fill that time because I've had things structured for so long. Um, and while I'm looking forward to it, it's like I don't know how to fill the hours. So, um, I think it can be, you know, a,

a wonderful experience for people. Um, and again, most people make the transition successfully. Um, but it's right after that. Many times people kind of struggle with it. The more abrupt the, the change, the more difficult people would be expected to have to make that change. It's, it's likely to cause more problems. Um, simply because again, if I think, well, I'm going to retire after the end of my senior year, even if it goes faster than I thought or it creeps up on me, I still knew that was what was going to happen. But if I suffer a career ending injury as a sophomore, um, and it's abrupt, I didn't see it coming in any way, shape or form. Now all of a sudden that feels like something was taken away as opposed to, you know, me getting to live out or like continue out the rest of the career that I even thought that I was going to have. So, you know, anything unplanned, uh, tends to make it much more difficult, um, for people. But again, most people do make the transition well.

Greg:

13:41

Yeah. Um, let's see. What would you say are some of the dangers or symptoms that go on from career ending injury or just that abruptness. Like oh my athletic career is over. Is there depression, a chance of isolation?

Julie: [13:54](#) Yeah. So when people have, uh, have an abrupt end or when, when they're not making the transition particularly well, I mean, I think it's, it's much like anything else where they're not handling the transition. Um, you know, the idea that people might withdraw from activities that they, you know, previously found enjoyable. Um, the fact that they may lose a sort of built in social support is always a concern. Um, that's one that you might be more concerned with, with an injury. Um, because injuries can feel very isolating to people. Um, even if there's no intention on the part of anybody who's, who's part of that sport organization to make the person feel isolated, you know, they may not be coming to practice. They may be doing, you know, um, rehab kind of on their own. They may, you know, feel like, 'Oh, I can't engage with the rest of the team.' And that loss of social support can be really difficult for people because that tends to be their social world. You know, so much of their time is spent around other athletes that once they aren't an athlete, they are no longer a current athlete.

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Julie: [00:00](#) It can really feel like, okay, I, I don't know who to even talk to about this because nobody's gonna understand, um,

who's still playing and, and so it can be really isolating for people when they get into that situation. Again, the more abrupt it is, the more problematic that can tend to be. But I really feel like some of the loss of social support is one of the biggest issues that people experience. Then you add in again now, um, you know, what do I talk to people about? Like what are they gonna ask me about? Um, so that's where we know that, for example, for, for college athletes, them finishing their degree is one of the big predictors for who transitions more easily. That's why it's really important for us to make sure that the athletes are, are finishing out to, you know, put them in a good position to be able to move forward in whatever career it is that they're wanting to do. Yeah.

Greg: [00:54](#) It's so true, cause sometimes like when I'm home, I'll play like pickup basketball. That's my social life just doing that right. I didn't even play in college. That's how I prefer it sometimes.

Julie: [01:07](#) Yeah. I think when you talk to people that, that are making that transition. Um, you know, I had an, an athlete a long time ago who, um, was considering leaving their team like voluntarily. Like they had just, they were a sophomore.

They, but they, I think they were just kind of burned out and just kind of done with it. And one of the biggest concerns they had was, who am I going to hang out with? You know, like, what if the people that are still on the team don't want to hang out with me? And that ended up not happening. And then this person got like a regular job and they made tons of friends there. But I think they really did feel like, I, I don't know what's gonna happen because this is my whole social world right here. And if I don't have that, then where, what do I do? So yeah.

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Greg: [00:21](#) Um, going off what you were saying about their social life afterwards. Uh, can their mental health ever be at risk at all during those situations too, you said with isolation, depression?

Julie: [00:34](#) Yeah, I think, I think definitely that is always a concern. Again, I think the more abrupt the change, the more concern that we would generally tend to have. But I think if you look at, at like the literature that's out there on, on athletes leaving the sport role there is, there is a tremendous amount of overlap with what, how you see it looked at compared to, again, people with any kind of a major life

transition, which can put people at risk for, um, you know, having, having, um, issues with mental health because again, you're talking about changing something pretty significant about their life. Um, and then again, the more you add in, um, factors like the abruptness of it. Um, was it planned? Um, you know, did they accomplish everything that they wanted to in their sport? Um, you know, which for some people it might be like, well, I want to play professionally. Well, if they're not selected to play, you can see how that type of thing would absolutely be something that would be a stressor that could lead to somebody having, um, you know, concerns, you know, with how they're handling that type of thing. So I think it's really important that we remember that there is an, I I think, um, there's a need for the idea that we keep, keep, um, uh, like programs I guess or, or opportunities in place for people who are making that transition that they feel supported after the transition is made. You know, that, that it's not as simple as, okay, well you're done and then you take that uniform off and then you're never going to put it back on again. It can, can just be jarring and we want to make sure that people feel supported moving forward. Um, both socially,

emotionally, professionally, um, all of those things.

Because yeah, there can be certainly concerns that if people, again, most people make the transition fine. Those who don't though, like, what can we do to help with that transition? Um, because we don't want people to feel like, um, everything that they, you know, all of that support that they had is kind of jerked out from under them and now they're kind of just floating, trying to figure out, like, I don't know what the next step is at all. That's not, that's not a good feeling for anybody to have. Um, so we certainly want to make sure that that's not something that people feel like when they have to make that transition.

Greg: [02:51](#) Gotcha. Um, and in what ways can an athlete make that transition into a new one? What steps?

Julie: [03:00](#) I think there, there are a few things, uh, for an athlete to make a successful transition. First of all, I think it's important that we, um, again, I'm, I'm kind of thinking of it from a college athlete perspective more than anything else. Um, but certainly being prepared to leave college and enter the workforce in whatever way that is. Like it may be that you are maintaining, um, like connection with the sports world. I think it's one reason why so many athletes do

major in things that allow them to kind of continue in sports, um, because it is a big part of their life and they do care about it. Um, but whatever it is moving forward, what can we do to put people in a position to take the next step forward? Um, one of the things that I think a lot of, um, like transitional programs try to capitalize on is to help athletes to see how their athletic experience puts them in a position to be ready to move on. Um, and I, it sounds, I keep using this word, but it sounds really cliché to say it. However, I do think that there are some things that athletes come out of their experience with that they can capitalize on. Um, whether that is learning how to manage their time effectively. Okay. So you're not gonna find too many student athletes who, whether by choice or whether, because it's done for them, you know, like in terms of like their, their time being scheduled so heavily, they understand what it takes to, to fit a lot of things into a day. You know, they, they sort of have to be able to do that. Um, you know, being able to work with, you know, people from a lot of different backgrounds. Having taken on leadership roles before, um, establishing connections and like relationships in the community, doing community service. Um, but

helping people to see that, okay, just because you're athletic, um, you know, career is over, those skills can transfer over to what you're doing next. Um, so getting people to think about that. Um, you know, I think a lot of times transitional programs do focus a lot on that type of thing. Like, 'Oh, you know, you can move into like, here's how you can network and go into business and those are great.' But how can we help people understand the next steps with whether that's graduate school or going straight into a different type of job or stepping away from sport altogether. But I think helping people to see it coming, you know, so talking about that from the time people start, um, in college I think is important for any student. Um, because you want people to be thinking, okay, what am I doing now that puts me in a position to be in a good place later to kind of make the leap into, um, whatever job I want to do. Um, but for student athletes, I think it is one that we want to start early on. Like, let's start talking about this from the time that you step on campus as a freshman, what are some things that you need to be thinking about as a sophomore? Um, you know, if you're in a major and you're getting into your junior year and everybody else that's a major, um, eh,

with you is doing like study abroad or is doing internships and you aren't able to do that because you're expected to be on campus in the summer, that's fine. But what can we do to try to put you in position to think about those things?

Um, and I, and I think those are, those are all the, it sounds really basic, but at the same time, I think making sure people are thinking ahead because again, it will creep up on you faster than you realize. How can we help people to see what those things are? I think it's also important to put into place, um, transitional programs for like, 'Hey, if you are struggling with this, who do you talk to? Okay, let's make sure we have a referral network.' So no matter where you are, how can we help you find, you know, help. If you need to talk to someone about the transition and what's been difficult, how can we help you find somebody to do that?

Um, and be okay with kind of reaching out for that type of help. So whether it's, um, you know, professional help in terms of like helping you get ready to join the job force, is it help that you might need sort of dealing with um, the change that's happened, which again is a major life change, how can we help you to do that? So I think again, it's about making sure people are prepared and then giving them the

tools but then also making sure that they're not just, okay, well you graduated, good luck and make sure you write us a check and you know, whatever. Like no, we need to make sure that we're doing that for all students. But student athletes in particular, cause that part is going to, that athlete identity is going to be, um, in a way that's different for other students I think.

Greg: [07:37](#) Cool. Um, you mentioned about like the transition programs and whatnot. Um, is there stuff like that that exist? What are the resources that are available? If you could just elaborate on that?

Julie: [07:49](#) Sure. So, um, in terms of resources available, different schools do different things. Um, the in foray, which you know, is, is like academic advisors. Um, there are sort of like academic athletic advisors. They're professional organization. They have some like best practices that, that they have available, um, in order to kind of, you know, help people with the transition. Um, so there are programs at different schools that do different things, but I think most, most of the time the best practices center around a lot of the things that I mentioned before in terms of like making sure that people are thinking from the time that they are, again,

really from the time they step on campus. Um, to be thinking about how are you setting yourself up to like move forward from here. Um, I think those are kind of important things. You know, the NCAA has, has done some programming in the past. I think they've, they've kind of stepped away from the champs life skills, but that was kind of the previous iteration of it. Um, but I think they have also stepped up more to talk about like mental health issues, some of which revolve around this. Um, and so I think there's, there are different ways to do it because I do think, um, that there's, you know, different institutions just have different, um, strengths, different resources. Um, you know, if, if you're looking at like a power five school, my guess would be that you're just gonna find a lot more athletes that assume they're going pro than what you might see at a division three school. So I think you're gonna see some different things in place, um, in some schools compared to others, but whatever it looks like, I think the idea of breaking it down, again, even things like by class or, um, maybe even by, by major in the sense that again, some are going to be a little bit more driven by things like, you know, how to network or how are you going to get

internship experiences if you have some of these other responsibilities as an athlete and you maybe can't work in the summer in the same way that other people can. Um, you know, but, but tailoring these types of programs to the student athlete population that you have, um, and their particular needs I think is really important. And even by sport as well, again, some sports, you're going to have people that are much more, um, you know, maybe, uh, like on the track of like, I'm going to keep playing for awhile, uh, versus other where others where they know, okay, my, my career will end after my senior year. Um, so there's, it's not going to extend on beyond that.

Greg: [10:23](#) Uh, is there anything you can describe about the balance of figuring out, say like you have an athlete who, who is just really committed to going pro, but you know, maybe they're not at a power five school. Um, you know, you didn't want to be the bearer of bad news, but how does that develop?

Julie: [10:39](#) Right, right, right. I think that it, it, it's a, it's a great question because you do have people who are definitely, regardless of where they're at, they're going to be pursuing, you know, these possibilities. Um, and may not always see the benefit of, for example, completing the degree or I'll

come back and I'll finish that. And so I think, um, for one thing it's, it's having kind of a, uh, a united front that everybody is, is encouraging people to think about the like, what is the benefit of finishing this degree before you go out and do whatever. And so sometimes that might be, you know, I don't know. I don't think sometimes even hearing the percentages of people who succeed versus don't necessarily kind of makes any impact to people that are really, really dedicated to trying to make it professionally. But I think at least talking about what some of the numbers are, um, how can we try to get you through this? Um, I think in many ways, honestly, the, um, some of the like NCAA regulations now with some of the, like men's basketball and football for example, and even women's basketball where people can take classes in the summer. It actually has had, I don't know if it was an intended benefit or not, but, um, it does, has made it a lot easier for many athletes to finish a little early because they have so many hours that they're taking in the summer because they're here, like working, working out in the summer. And so they're, they're taking classes, um, and it puts them in a position to maybe graduate even a little early. Of course it's

then led to like grad transfers and some of that kind of stuff. But, um, I think it actually has helped people to see completing the degree, um, as being something more realistic, um, for most people who, who aren't like, I'm one and done and that kind of thing. So I think just a consistent message of like, these are the benefits, um, this is what you need to do to be able to, to finish. Um, and you know, the importance of, of like having that degree in hand. Um, I know people get cynical about it, I guess and whatever, but I, I really do wish that we still talked about the benefit of a college degree and, and if you're in this position and you have the opportunity to get this degree, you know, why not just finish it now because it does increase, you know, earning power. It does increase your options for doing some other things later on that, maybe I'm being too, uh, too optimistic about how people see college degree. I don't know. But yeah, I think that's an important message.

Greg: [13:22](#) I completely agree. If you're here, you might as well just get it.

Julie: [13:25](#) Exactly. You, you have so many things in place to help you, you know, get, get that degree and people helping you, you know, to like stay on track with things just because of it.

You know, you have to be making progress towards your degree or you're not eligible. So absolutely. Why not take advantage of that and put yourself in the position to, 'Hey, just in case things don't work out. You have this and it can't be taken away from you.'

Greg: [13:54](#) Oh, um, you had mentioned, in that article you sent me about enhancement, supportive and counseling strategies, um, could you kind of just give an explanation of each of those for audience purposes?

Julie: [14:13](#) Yes. Yeah. So it was enhancement and then counseling., were those the, or is there another one in there? Support. Yeah. So enhancement strategies are, um, ones that you would, you would expect to find sort of earlier on in somebody's experience, like college experience. Um, you know, so again, how can we capitalize on some of the things that, and the supportive ones I think are both sort of about, alright, how do we, how do we help to, um, enhance some of the things that people are bringing in with them? So, again, like most athletes are, are, you know, hard workers, so how can we, um, sort of apply that to other areas, you know, with support. We want to make sure that we have people again in place or, or, um, uh, support.

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Julie: 00:00 mechanisms, I guess, in place for helping people, um, when they're getting ready to make the transition out. So again, whether that's help with things like, um, resume building, um, which, you know, you can find that on any, any college campus. But again, how can we take what an athlete potentially has been doing for four years and then apply it? Like how can they highlight those things or how can they capitalize on those things? Um, again, like finding internships or, um, applying for graduate schools or those types of things. Um, and then counseling wise, again, some of that might happen, you know, prior to the, the transition, but how are we going to put some things in place that if people are struggling with that transition that we make sure that they are, that they have resources in place to help them make the transition more effectively. Um, so it's, again, it's, it's not about, um, when we try to help somebody transition from anything, it's not about, okay, well, um, now you're past the transition, so let's try to deal with it. But rather, how do we prepare you? How are you making the transition and then what happens afterwards that we may need to help with? So, um, with a lot of the programming that I was, you

know, we were kind of talking about before, I think most of those programming approaches have tried to capitalize on that. Again, like early on, so freshman, sophomore year, let's talk about these things, you know, junior and senior year, maybe it's more about like, let's get you ready to fly out of the nest baby bird. And then lastly, like, you're out of the nest now. How are you doing? Um, and we want to make sure that it's not just, again, like, here's your diploma, thanks for the four years. Um, we'll see you later. But how can we make sure, like reaching out to make sure that people are still doing well, um, and making the transition in an effective way.

Greg: [01:47](#) Perfect. Can you go into, just how media affects in athletics?

Julie: [01:57](#) Yeah. Yeah. So, you know, the media has a, has a really, I think, important role in all of this. And again, some of this is just, you know, tied to the fact that some athletes like have been in the public eye for a very long time. And again, the idea that suddenly that will be gone, um, that people wouldn't be covering them in the same way, um, or, or you know, that their, their role in the public eye is going to be different, can be really hard. But I do think that there's

more and more of a recognition of how many people can struggle with this. So for example, I think, you know, um, Michael Phelps has been really, really straight forward and really open about, um, some of his struggles, not only with like his mental health when he was competing, but also just like that sort of transition that he had to make, um, from being somebody that, I mean from the time he was, I don't know, 14, 15, something like that when he went to his first Olympic games. Um, you know, that however many years later, like that's a long time to be in the public eye. And I know not every college athlete certainly has that level of awareness that people have, but it's amazing, you know, especially like in a, in a smaller town, like people know who the athletes are on this campus. They absolutely do. And I don't care what the sport is, like people know who they are. And so having that and then going to kind of being a regular, a regular person, um, you know, is, that's kind of a big adjustment. So I think, um, in, so kind of two things like the media has a role in this in terms of, you know, people really identifying with themselves as an athlete because that's again what maybe people see or like that's the part that's highlighted. But I think the media then

also, um, in the last few years in particular has done a much better job of kind of saying, 'Hey, when these people are done, like their life goes on and we need to make sure that we're not losing sight of the fact that this is, um, that these are real people with real feelings about the fact that something very important to them.' Probably central to their lives in many ways, um, is now over and, you know, so what are some of the things that we need to pay attention to? So like, this project is a good example of that.

Greg: [04:13](#) Yeah. Thank you.

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Greg: [00:00](#) Uh, about the, the resources and the programs we've mentioned. Um, do you feel like athletes are aware? Are they using them? Um, and if not, what, what would prevent an athlete from using them?

Julie: [00:37](#) Yeah, I think, um, yes, that, that there are, um, I think more and more athletes are understanding the importance of it. Again, whether it's because they see it in the media or more athletes are more open about, um, you know, whether it's mental health issues or struggles that they may have had or, or successes that they may have had with transitioning out of their sport. Um, I think more student athletes are

thinking about some of those things, um, a little bit earlier on. Um, and I think, I like to think that, um, you know, that making sure that, that, um, that we're thinking about ways that we can like promote that to, uh, to people becomes more and more important. Um, I think that, uh, I don't know whether it's because again, there's just more of an awareness of it or we're doing a better job of sort of promoting that to people. Um, but, uh, I like to think that those, those programs are, um, becoming more of kind of a standard of care. Um, the NCAA, again has, has definitely started to emphasize mental health a lot more than they had in the past, I think. Um, and so I think more and more people are sort of recognizing that this is a part of it. Um, and again, you know, some student athletes are really glad to be done and some of them are glad to be done and so it's not an issue. Um, and they're going to make the transition very easily and there'll be, they'll enjoy the free time that they have. They won't struggle with that at all. Um, but again, it's just we want to make sure that everybody is in that boat and that, um, and that people know what the resources are that are available. Um, and we therefore, I think removing as much of the stigma as possible is a

critical piece for that because, you know, if somebody is going to not ask for help, it does become more difficult to make sure that they're getting any resources that they need. Um, and that's why I think it's good that we just make the assumption everybody needs it and then it's here if you need it. Um, I think sometimes it makes it easier than just waiting for people to come and ask for it because that can be very difficult. And I think it's also very, um, I know that we're not talking specifically about burnout, but I think, um, if I can kind of refer back to something we talked about before, um, you know, so many athletes you're taught, um, don't complain, work hard, you know, like keep pushing, always be striving to be your best. And those are all wonderful things. When people feel like, I can't, I can't, I don't want to complain about anything. I don't want to, you know, I don't want people to think that I can't handle this or that. This is something that I'm struggling with. It just makes it that much harder than for people to say afterwards like, uh, yeah, this, I, I'm not doing well with this. Um, and again, I like to think that that's changing, but um, it can feel really isolating at times. Like, 'Oh, I'm the only one who feels this way.' Everyone else seems like

they're like, they've retired and everybody's happy and loving life that they don't have to go to practice when, you know, you may have several people that are actually struggling with it, but they're putting on a brave face. Um, like, 'Oh no, I don't want anybody to know that. This is how I feel. It happens with burnout sometimes. Like, um, it feels really isolating because as an athlete you're never supposed to say you don't want to go to practice or, I mean, you know, you're never supposed to say, um, boy, I'm really excited to be done. I'm sick of this. Um, but it's a love hate relationship. So it, it can be really hard for people to reconcile those two things.

Greg: [04:24](#) Yeah. Um, going off that. When you said it's almost becoming more popular to talk about, say like LeBron James with the whole More Than An Athlete community stuff like that, helping it bring it out?

Julie: [04:40](#) Yeah. So I think that in the last few years, I mean maybe five years or so, I think that again, the emphasis has just started to be more on, um, the idea that I'm not just an athlete and I think you see it, um, that there have been some really high profile professional athletes, which I think is important for that to be heard. I, I don't have a whole lot of

evidence for this, but I suspect that some of this also comes from like how ubiquitous like social media is. So almost every athlete has a social media account and not maybe almost every, but many of them have social media accounts that allows them to like interact with fans, which I'm sure is wonderful and also horrible at the same time. Um, because you, you know, sometimes people need to be reminded that, uh, these are human beings as well. Like, so just because, uh, somebody that you follow or a team that you follow, somebody makes a mistake does not necessarily give you the right to hop on social media and like question everything about them or make death threats or whatever craziness people get into. Um, but it's like, yeah, I'm a human being as well. Like this isn't all that I am. So I think it's probably kind of a good thing and a bad thing that it gives people an opportunity to see athletes are not just athletes. Um, and then some of the, yeah, some of the um, like, uh, efforts that some really high profile athletes have made to kind of talk about more than an athlete or, um, you know, I would even say, you know, again, I know that that the NCAA, sometimes it gets a, a rep for whatever, but you know, their whole like going pro in something other than

sports, I do actually think is an important message that they've, that they've really tried to hammer home and I appreciate that because it's like, yes, that is, that is the reality for most people who play, is that they are not going to be competing beyond this. And so there needs to be an emphasis on what are you doing afterwards? Cause that's not what you're going to be a professional at. You're going to be a professional at something else. And so that's important as well. So I think that's been another good, you know, another good sort of reminder to people

Greg: [06:56](#) For sure. Uh, what would you say, you know, perhaps some words of encouragement to an athlete who is feeling lost with their identity?

Julie: [07:06](#) Sure. So I think for any athlete, I mean it just, it does come down to understanding that you are, you know, you are an athlete, that it would never be something where we would expect people to not feel like that's an important part of who they are. But I would encourage people to remember that that's only one part of who you are. You know that there are so many things that you, that you are as a person. Interests that you have, qualities that you bring to the table that go well beyond just what you can do on your team or

in your sport. And so it is about remembering that even if those haven't been maybe the primary focus that you've had or like that may not seem like something that you spend a lot of time in your day thinking about or doing. Those things are there and you haven't, you're not only your sport and you're not only your performance, right? So that's, that's hard for us to remember when we're really, really like super invested in it. And that is the, the main thing that we're kind of centered around. But absolutely, there are so many parts to you as a person that, that you bring to the table. Um, and so it's, it's, um, the wonderful thing about college is that you get to develop those. Um, and even if sport is one that's, that's kind of at the forefront, that doesn't mean that the other things aren't important, aren't valued or aren't relevant for you to, to feel good about or to develop

Greg: [08:38](#) Alright. Uh, that is pretty much all the questions I have for you. I always like to end it by leaving you the floor. If there's any additional comments you want to make or maybe there's some points that I didn't touch upon. I always just like to, yeah.

Julie: [08:56](#) Yeah. I think we covered probably most of the things that I would think that are important. Um, I think this is a real, I

really do think this is a really important topic to, to cover.

Um, I think it's probably repeating something I said before, but I just, I just really hope that people, um, understand the importance of, of thinking about these issues. Um, because again, it just feels like so many times they creep up on us.

And again, it is not just athletes, but like it just, time moves really quickly and you think you've got all of this time to do X, Y, and Z. um, or to like, you know, that, oh, it's, I'm not a parent, so I probably shouldn't use this as an example.

But you know, the, the phrase that I hear a lot of my friends who are parents say is that the days are long, but the years are short. So it's the same kind of thing when you're, to me, when you're talking about, um, you know, it's a grind. It's, it's day in and day out. You're up early, you're doing a lot of things, um, and they're all centered around this thing that again, you've been doing for a long time. But, um, it will go quicker than what you think. And that's if you go to the end of a four year, maybe five year career, um, and anytime something disrupts that, it's just, it's difficult. And, and we just always want to make sure that people feel comfortable asking for help when they get in a difficult situation. Yeah.

The end.

Greg: 10:31 Alright. Thank you very much.

Julie: 10:33 Oh, of course. I'm always happy to talk.

JUSTIN FETCHO TRANSCRIPT

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- Greg: 00:05 Alright. Um, you may see me look over here a couple times. I'm just making sure it's still rolling, checking on my levels, all that. Um, if you could, when I ask a question for your answers, try to incorporate the question in your answer. So if I say, what is your favorite color? You would say my favorite color is blue, just blue, around what's going on. Um, this is recorded. So if you say an answer, you're like, oh, maybe I want to say that over again and whatever, you know, we can redo it or get it to the point, if you like your answer type of deal. Um, of course you're allowed to ignore any questions as well. Um, and yeah, so we can roll on it. So just start off by telling me how long have you been coaching golf?
- Justin: 01:43 Yeah, so this is, I've been coaching, this is year 11 for me, um, six years as a head coach here at SIU. And then, um, every year prior to that was, I was an assistant at various places along the way. So.
- Greg: 02:00 Awesome. And why did you decide to coach golf? Did you have mentor beforehand?

Justin:

02:03

You know, that's a, that's a great question. I, I got into coaching golf, um, mainly I, I went to school at university of South Florida, played golf down there and then decided that, uh, you know, I wanted, I wanted to play professional golf, so I, I turned pro and played golf for, um, it was about, I was going on about three years and then my coach called me, old college coach called me and said he had an opening for an assistant, wanted to know if I would want to come help out. And quite honestly, I hadn't really thought about coaching. I, I, uh, I took the job based on the fact that I thought that I'd still get to go and practice my own game and, and try to maybe help me further in my career a little bit for, for playing. And, uh, you know, I got into it and, uh, I loved it. I loved everything about it from the recruiting aspect to helping young players hopefully, uh, you know, reach their, their dreams and their goals of playing the highest level. And, uh, you know, it was just kinda one of those things where my golf game kind of went on the back burner. But, uh, you know, the, the enjoyment of being around it and being able to try to provide, you know, help and feedback to others was, was what really drew me, um, to staying in coaching and kind of being able to almost

come full circle and be back, uh, you know, here at Southern Illinois.

Greg: [03:22](#) Nice. Um, talk about your, your transition a little bit from being in collegiate level to going pro, um, was that something you always had in mind.? Did you have a coach that pushed you to do that?

Justin: [03:38](#) Yeah. You know, I think probably like most people that grow up playing sports, you know, your dream is always to play professional, you know, whatever that is. And for me, with golf, I, I fell in love with golf. Um, you know, I, I practiced and played all the time as a junior player and then I was fortunate to, um, you know, get a scholarship division one and move on and play. And, you know, I always have, I always knew that once my time was up, I wanted to, I wanted to give it a shot. You know what I mean? For golf, I think it's a little bit different in terms of, you know, I mean if you're talking about basketball or football or something, you know, there's a, there's a draft process and you have to go through, you know, you have to be selected to kind of move on. Obviously there's other levels. It's not just NBA. I mean, you can move on and play at, you know, other developmental levels. And I think that's, you know, for me,

I knew that that's probably where I was going to have to start golf wise was at the development, developmental level of professional golf. So played a bunch of mini tour stuff, traveling around, and you're trying to work your way to the highest level, trying to get yourself to the PGA tour. And, uh, you know, I mean, again, I think that the aspirations were always there to be playing and I mean, quite honestly, they're still there. I'd love to be out there playing and, and competing right now, but, uh, you know, that was just something that I always wanted, that I always wanted to, you know, I feel like pushed me to work hard to be able to, you know, not just get to play in college, but, you know, try to push me while I was in college to be able to continue to get better and grow and, and like I said, hopefully, you know, make a living out of it.

Greg:

05:13

Awesome. Um, talk about kind of that you're, you're ending your college career, um, and you, you had mentioned that you knew you're gonna probably have to start the developmental, uh, level. Um, was that more of like a self awareness, uh, decision or was your coach kinda in your ear saying where you can be at to guiding you along the way?

Justin:

05:39

Yeah. You know, again, for golf, you know, there are, there are several ways to try to make it out. And I think, you know, as I'm coming out of college trying to figure out exactly what I'm going to do. I mean obviously there's a, there's a, what they call a tour school, which is where you go through, you know, basically four stages of, you know, different, you know, different times where you're trying to qualify. And if you make it through every stage, you know, you could get your PGA tour card or then there's also a separate route where you can play, you know, weekly and they have these Monday qualifiers where you can travel across the country and play in a Monday qualifier with the, I mean upwards to 150 people and there's, you know, two to four spots available for that week to be able to try. So, I mean, I, you know, I did kind of a combination of that, but you can't, I mean that's, that's something that, um, you know, you can't base your living on doing that. I mean, I think it would be very difficult to do so. So, you know, when I talk about the developmental side, it's just, uh, there's other tours that are PGA tour that you can kind of have the same setup, um, and be able to go and, you know, put yourself in the same situations of a four day tournament

with a cut, with trying to gain experience of, you know, playing for money or, you know, whatever that might be that, you know, you're not used to because, you know, we, you, you can't do that. And, and at the collegial level, I mean, you can't go out and have a, you know, there's a purse for \$1 million. So, I mean, it's a different, it's a different experience when you're out there and you're doing it. And even though the lower levels weren't quite like that, I knew if I could kind of start there, you know, gained some success and then just kind of build my way up. I mean, I think that's, to me, that was the key. I mean anytime that you do something, I think you have to, you know, gain confidence and see yourself being successful so that you know, you can always see yourself climbing the ladder. And so, you know, I think probably more of a personal self awareness of being able to understand this is, this is where I'm going to have to start to be able to make it, to be able to put my, you know, my best foot forward to hopefully having a career in this. Um, but then also I think, you know, I mean if you're around people that are around your game or your sport, I think if you trust the right people, they can kind of navigate you on where, where you should be, you

know, where he should be going. Because again, it's a whole new game and you don't want to go put yourself in a situation where you know, theoretically you're just getting kicked in the teeth every time. You know, where you just, where it's always just coming at you and you can't ever seem to kind of, you're just digging yourself, trying to find a way to get out of this hole. And I think if you can slowly, gradually be able to find ways to gain confidence, gain success from different areas that can only help you in the long run.

Greg: [08:15](#) Cool. Um, during your time as a coach, have you ever had a moment where you've had a conversation with one of your athletes about what could be the next step for them as far as, you know, whether it's their golf career or something, a life after golf? Um, really, have you ever had like a conversation, about this person's transitional or their potential after the collegial career?

Justin: [08:39](#) Yeah. You know what I mean? I think that that's, you know, part of coaching is trying to help people after college, right? I mean, that's, that's part of what our job is, I believe is, you know, we want them to be the best when they're here, but we also want to be able to help them transition

into life or hope, hopefully they're professional sports. So yes, you know, I've had had conversations with different people and usually, you know, it always starts early. Like I said, freshman year, sophomore year, you still have the ambition and the desire to play professional golf. And then, you know, as you get into it, you know, maybe by your senior year I've had conversations with people that, you know, they know that I have, that I have tried it, that I have played it. So they just want some advice, some, some pointers, some tips of how to go about it, maybe where to play, where to get started, you know, how to maybe gain sponsorship from different people. But then also on the flip side, we've had conversations with people that, you know, they understand that maybe professional golf is not for them, but they still want to kind of be involved. And maybe that's in a coaching capacity. Maybe that's, you know, doing, being a, a head pro at a golf course and what that might entail. Or just trying to, you know, stay in golf but maybe not be a professional golfer. So, yeah, I think that there's, there's been, you know, several conversations, like I said, this is year six for me here now. So we've had a pretty decent cycle of seniors that have rolled through and all

those time that each have their own different aspirations in their own things that they want to accomplish. But again, just trying to be a sounding board for those athletes that are about to make a leap into, you know, whatever field it is that they want to go into.

Greg: [10:18](#) Awesome. Um, how during these conversations, how honest do you feel you can be with them? Like, uh, not to, not to be negative, but you feel like an athlete is at one level, but yet say like the athlete thinks he's here, but you know, that potential is kind of far. Um, can you be honest with an athlete to let them know, like, where you stand, um, you know, at this point in your career?

Justin: [10:48](#) No, I think that, uh, another thing with, with coaching, there comes, you know, sometimes, sometimes a student athlete is gonna like what you have to say and sometimes they're not. But I think that being honest with them is obviously that's what they, they may not want it in that moment, but I think deep down at the end of it, they want you to be honest with them and try to provide that feedback. And you know, I mean, you have to be, you have to be honest with the student athlete about, you know, what it is that they want to do and what you can see. But you

know, I think that there's also a piece of it where if somebody, if somebody has it in their mind and they're dead set, that they can do it, who can stop them, you know? I mean, who, who can stop them from if they believe it and they're willing to work at it. You know, you can't stop somebody from, you know, having, having just a big heart and they want to be able to go do that. And I think, you know, in maybe those types of situations, those are ones where you can talk about going out, attempting to do it, attempting to play professional golf and trying it, but then what's in the back pocket, you know? I mean the degree that they're earning, the things that maybe some other things that maybe they're interested in, not to necessarily, you don't push them away from trying to go and reach a dream or whatever it might be. But also they have a, maybe a plan B, you know, a plan C, just whatever things might not work out for them in the very first thing. But you can talk to them about other things that you can see them doing and you know, other things where you can see them being successful. And I think that's important too. You know what I mean? Just, you know, we can't be so streamlined into, somebody can only do one thing and one thing only. I think

that, you know, if they have some options, I think it's good for them to be able to hear that.

Greg: 12:42 Absolutely. Very well said. Uh, have you ever had an athlete where say they've graduated and they come back to you and maybe they're just struggling with their transition after their college career post graduation?

Justin: 13:02 Right. You know, I, I think as a coach we want to also be in touch with our student athletes after they leave here. I mean, I think that's a big piece of it. And you know, sometimes it might not be the, it might not be right away. Sometimes it may be two years down the line, three years down the line. But I think it's just, you know, to me it's great to hear from, you know, from the former players really. And you know, I mean some of the, some of the players where maybe I feel like I've been the hardest on are the ones that are continuing to reach back out later. And you know, to me that, um, it means a lot, you know, I, I appreciate that they see me as someone that they want to let know what's going on in their life and, and how they're doing. And, you know, I, I'm always been one that even here, you know, open door policy and the same for when they leave. If they need me, you know, they can call me,

they can text me, they can do whatever it is that they need for me to be able to help them out. So, I mean, we've had a few conversations with some different people about different things. I mean, I don't, I don't think that I've given any, uh, you know, groundbreaking advice to anybody maybe since they've gotten out. But I think just maybe just a voice for them to just kind of hear. Um, and like I said, it, a lot of it might be around if somebody wants to get into the coaching profession or somebody wants to be around athletics still, you know, just because they know that I've been doing it for a while and just be able to just kind of pick my brain on some ideas of, hey, you know, how would I get into this? How would I get started? You know, do you enjoy it? What's it like? And I think just being able to, you know, again, provide, provide resources, uh, to somebody to be able to help them with these options that they might be able to have. You know what I mean? Just because, I mean, me for sure, I mean, I got a degree in, in education, and while I do feel like I'm teaching and helping, you know, the student athletes here, that's not necessarily what, you know, I got my degree in and that's, you know.

- Justin: [00:00](#) So I think even if they got a degree in something else, being able to just talk with them about other options that they might have. Um, and that's where I think that, you know, that's when you know that you'd have the respect of the players that have come through here is when they want to reach back out and they want to hear your advice on certain things.
- Greg: [00:17](#) Sure. Uh, do you have any go-to advice or is there any advice you can think of off the top of your head that you would tell a student athlete if they are struggling?
- Justin: [00:35](#) Go to advice for student athletes? That's a, that's a, that's a good, good question. You know, I think again, it's a lot about, I think what I would say is probably just maybe, maybe bring them back like they were into our program and just talk to them a little bit. I mean, it's hard to, it's hard to do anything golf or anything in life if you don't, if you don't believe in yourself, if you don't have confidence in what you're doing and you know, it can't be a false confidence. And you can't be so far on the extreme where you have this cocky arrogance about it. But I mean, you have to be able to, you have to be able to believe in what you're doing. You know, you have to be able to believe in

the work that you're doing or maybe the path that you've chosen that, that, that is something that you want to do and that you believe that, you know, you're working hard and you can see yourself in that. And if you can't, then maybe it's time to be able to look at, look at something else. But I mean, if you don't, if you don't believe it, you know what I mean? In your heart, then you know, you're, you're telling yourself a lie basically. So I think just being able to kind of get them to kind of have the confidence and the belief in themselves, because again, that's just, golf is such a mental game that this is, it's the same with life. I mean, if you start to, um, have this unwavering ability about yourself, about some things you could bring to the work environment, I mean, whatever it might be, that's when the doubts want to creep in. That's when all that stuff wants to happen. But you know, if you, if deep down, you know, and you believe that you know that you can do it or you know, that, that the papers you're writing for work or whatever it might, that the, that, that it's doing, it's doing its course and it's gonna pay off for you in the longer and may not be right that second, just like golf may go out and put all this time in and it may not happen in the next tournament, but it's going to

happen at some point if you keep putting in putting in the work, but also believing. And so I think, you know, if somebody was struggling, odds are the confidence level is not high. So just finding a way to just pick them up a little bit I think is, is an important piece.

Greg: [02:41](#) Awesome. Overall, you kind of touched on it, but overall, what would you say is your favorite part about coaching?

Justin: [02:50](#) There's a, there's, there's lots of things I enjoy about coaching, but honestly, and going back to talking about how I even got into coaching, one of the main things that kept me was the recruiting aspect. And I think that there's a lot of things that go on within that, but I think a big part of that is just the relationships. You know, I mean with recruiting, yes we have these players here for four years, but you're recruiting them one to two to sometimes three years in advance building those relationships. And so, you know, I think just being able to, you know, get to know the players, maybe get to know their families, get to know where they're from a little bit, um, and be able to try to help them out. You know what I mean? Be able to help kind of push them down this path where, you know, they're going to be able to see success in the long run. And, you know,

and I think just as I would tell them when they come in here, I mean everybody wants to see success just in this nice straight line just working its way up. But you know, the reality is there's going to be some ups, there's gonna be some downs. And if we can just try to keep moving in that order just where it doesn't get too far down and it doesn't get too high, we just kind of stay in that path. And I think that's when you learn about them. And I think that's where you can kind of get that sense of, you know, you can kind of pick up on it maybe before they even do or before somebody else, when you really, when you really know somebody. And I think for me, um, that's what keeps me doing what I love, being around the team. You know, I love being around the guys. I'm, you're, you're around them just as much if not more than your own family. So I mean, being around, being around them is enjoyable. And I think just trying to push them to maybe even places that they can't even foresee in their mind is, is something that I, that I enjoy being able to, to try to do.

Greg:

04:40

Awesome. That's, those are all the questions I have for you regarding this topic. I always like to leave it open the interviewee if you want to add additional comments.

Justin:

04:54

No man, that, that's great. Yeah. So hopefully, hopefully some of it will pertain to some, some of the things you're talking about.

PART 2
SCRIPT

TITLE: ATHLETIC IDENTITY**TRT: 28 minutes**

VIDEO	AUDIO
<p>Fade from black: Video montage introducing characters, showing glimpses of their athletic identity.</p> <p>Whip transition</p> <p>00:39</p>	<p>Music - Song : I'm Just Good</p> <p>NATS</p> <p>00:39</p>
<p>Title card: Athletic Identity</p> <p>Fade to black</p> <p>00:50</p>	<p>Music fades</p> <p>00:50</p>
<p>Drone shot: Baseball field, flying up</p> <p>Text: More than 460,000 NCAA student athletes compete in 24 sports year after year.</p> <p>- NCAA</p> <p>1:07</p>	<p>Music - Song: Adrift</p> <p>1:07</p>
<p>Dutch angle: Push shot of NFL graphics in hallway</p> <p>1:09</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>1:09</p>

<p>Wide shot of NFL graphics on wall</p> <p>Text: Fewer than 2 percent of NCAA student-athletes go on to be professional athletes.</p> <p>MCU shot of Salukis in the NFL</p> <p>1:13</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>1:13</p>
<p>MCU shot of Salukis in the NFL</p> <p>1:17</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>1:17</p>
<p>Full screen graphic: Percentage that go pro</p> <p>1:27</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>1:27</p>
<p>On camera: Julie Partridge</p> <p>Lower third title</p> <p>1:34</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: So athletic identity is the idea how strongly somebody identifies with the athletic role.</p> <p>1:34</p>
<p>MCU of Saluki basketball jersey</p> <p>Text: Athletic identity is the degree to which an individual identifies with the athlete role - Brewer et al. 1993</p> <p>1:40</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>1:40</p>

<p>MS of Genesis Ewell performing barbell hang cleans</p> <p>1:43</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: And if you're talking about a college athlete,</p> <p>1:43</p>
<p>Spin around golf clubs</p> <p>1:47</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>you're talking about somebody who has spent probably three quarters of their life</p> <p>1:47</p>
<p>Stand alone MS of football cleats and helmet</p> <p>1:53</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>really strongly engaged in the athlete role.</p> <p>1:53</p>
<p>On camera: Julie Partridge</p> <p>2:01</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: That identity as an athlete is very strong and is sometimes something that forecloses pretty early in terms of this is what I am, I'm an athlete.</p> <p>2:01</p>
<p>Drone shot spinning around track field</p> <p>2:06</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: Um, that's what kinda, um, my entire world revolves around. So... You know, all of my friends are athletes.</p> <p>2:01</p>

<p>Game footage of Henry warming up</p> <p>2:12</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: Everybody that I know identifies me as that. People will ask me how my season is going.</p> <p>2:12</p>
<p>CU of golf ball getting hit by putter</p> <p>Text: When athletes exclusively identify with the athlete role and do not possess other sources of self-worth or self-identification, they may be at an increased risk of emotional disturbance.</p> <p>2:23</p>	<p>Music continue</p> <p>2:23</p>
<p>CU blurred shot of tying baseball cleats</p> <p>Text: Individuals with a strong and exclusive athletic identity may be vulnerable to emotional difficulties when presented with sport retirement - Brewer et al. 1993</p> <p>2:33</p>	<p>Music continue</p> <p>2:33</p>

<p>On Camera: Julie Partridge</p> <p>2:49</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: We want to keep in mind that the strong that identity is as an athlete, when that is done, we have to know what the next, like what else is there. And if the only thing we have is athlete, um, there's always a concern when that person is done playing, the question becomes, now who am I?</p> <p>2:49</p>
<p>Text: Who Am I?</p> <p>Dip to black</p> <p>2:55</p>	<p>Music fades out</p> <p>2:55</p>
<p>Fade from black</p> <p>WS Genesis Ewell running at track meet</p> <p>3:06</p>	<p>Music - Song: Heaven & Hell</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: I don't even what to think about that (nervous laugh). I feel like I would be lost a little bit. Like, what do I do now?</p> <p>3:06</p>

<p>On camera: Genesis Ewell</p> <p>Lower third title</p> <p>3:28</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: Cause this is so, like it's been such a part of my routine. I wake up thinking about track. I go to sleep thinking about track.</p> <p>Um, track this, track that, meeting this, lift that. I feel like I'm going to be so lost and looking like okay what do I do now? Like I have the whole day to do whatever, what do I do? Eh, that's a hard question (scratches head). Cause, eh. I'd be lost, I don't want to think about that.</p> <p>3:28</p>
<p>Photo of Genesis being interviewed</p> <p>3:34</p>	<p>Music starts to fade</p> <p>3:34</p>
<p>Genesis practicing relay with teammate</p> <p>3:37</p>	<p>Music - Song: Chef Brian</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: I run track. I run the 200, the 400, uh the relay with the 400,</p> <p>3:37</p>

<p>On camera: Genesis Ewell</p> <p>3:41</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>and the occasional 4x1.</p> <p>3:41</p>
<p>WS (vertical) Genesis hurdling</p> <p>3:44</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>NATS: Hit it! Hit it!</p> <p>3:44</p>
<p>Photo: Genesis presented medal</p> <p>Text: (6) All-MVC</p> <p>3:48</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: Six time MVC-All MVC,</p> <p>3:48</p>
<p>Photo: Relay team on podium</p> <p>Text: (4) MVC Champion, 4x400 Relay</p> <p>3:51</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>four time MVC champ in the 4x4,</p> <p>3:51</p>
<p>Photo: Photo: Group of girls at NCAA qualifier</p> <p>3:56</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>West Regional Qualifier NCAA qualifier.</p> <p>3:56</p>

<p>On camera: Genesis Ewell</p> <p>4:02</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Uh, haha... And some other stuff I can't even think of right now.</p> <p>4:02</p>
<p>Pan across books on table</p> <p>4:09</p>	<p>Music fades</p> <p>Music - Song: Slow Hammer</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: I'm already stressing about grad school, GRE's,</p> <p>4:09</p>
<p>On Camera: Genesis Ewell (2)</p> <p>4:11</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>what am I going to do once I get done.</p> <p>4:11</p>
<p>On Camera: Genesis Ewell</p> <p>4:20</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>My Track career is over, so I'm just like go pro, or, what? What am I doing? So it's scary, and kind of stressful.</p> <p>4:20</p>
<p>MCU of Genesis hunching over with water bottle.</p> <p>4:27</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>4:27</p>

<p>WS of team workout</p> <p>4:32</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: I don't know if I want to keep doing this. Um, putting my body through stress. It's hard, you know,</p> <p>4:32</p>
<p>On Camera: Genesis Ewell</p> <p>4:38</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>hurting all the time. And, trying to figure out how I'm supposed to heal myself if I'm constantly putting</p> <p>4:38</p>
<p>On Camera: Genesis Ewell (2)</p> <p>4:45</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>pressure on my body. But at the same time, I like to do this. Track is my life, and I want to keep going with it, so...</p> <p>4:45</p>
<p>On Camera: Genesis Ewell</p> <p>4:48</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>ehhh right now (nervous laugh).</p> <p>4:48</p>
<p>WS of team doing skips in gym</p> <p>4:50</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>4:50</p>

<p>Pan following Genesis at practice handing baton</p> <p>4:53</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: A lot of people see like what we go through.</p> <p>4:53</p>
<p>MS Genesis skips</p> <p>4:59</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Like, collegiate track & field is extremely taxing to our bodies.</p> <p>4:59</p>
<p>On Camera: Genesis Ewell (2)</p> <p>5:04</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>So, waking up early, super early in the morning, to like go to lift or go practice.</p> <p>5:04</p>
<p>On Camera: Genesis Ewell</p> <p>5:07</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>You know, we have classes throughout the day, that's stress.</p> <p>5:07</p>
<p>MCU Genesis lifting barbel</p> <p>5:15</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: It's variation, but like the same routine. Everyday, I'm always hurting.</p> <p>5:45</p>

<p>MCU of Genesis's legs on foam roller</p> <p>5:22</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>I mean even with the treatment we have, I'm always hurting. I'm always tired. I'm always sore. But I have to push through it.</p> <p>5:22</p>
<p>Photo of girls at nationals</p> <p>5:27</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: And the pressure is really high for me considering that we went to nationals last year and I'm putting self pressure on myself. And the coaches are like,</p> <p>5:27</p>
<p>On Camera: Genesis Ewell</p> <p>5:37</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>you know, you have to get to nationals again, so I'm trying to turn by body up more and more this year than I did last year because I know what I want to do.</p> <p>Music fades</p> <p>5:37</p>

<p>MCU of track tattoo on shoulder</p> <p>5:42</p>	<p>Music - Song: Muffled Tines</p> <p>I have to have a constant reminder, you know, this is what I love. This, track has made me who I am; it's kind of a part of my identity.</p> <p>5:42</p>
<p>Photo: Genesis running</p> <p>5:48</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>And I feel like it's going to be with me for the rest of my life, so why not get a tattoo that's going to be on me for the rest of my life.</p> <p>5:48</p>
<p>Spinning drone WS of track field</p> <p>5:57</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: I mean, I could coach. I don't really want to coach, for real.</p> <p>5:57</p>
<p>On Camera: Genesis Ewell</p> <p>6:05</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>I don't know. I probably gotta find me a hobby (nervous laugh) after this, because I'm going to be so lost.</p> <p>6:05</p>
<p>MS Genesis against backdrop laughing</p> <p>6:13</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: I mean, I want to be know for track. I don't know.</p> <p>6:13</p>

<p>WS (vertical) Genesis against green screen</p> <p>6:19</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>I want to be known as somebody who is an inspiration to people. I want to be know as Genesis, the hard worker. Genesis, the,</p> <p>6:19</p>
<p>On Camera: Genesis Ewell</p> <p>6:32</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>she likes challenges.I mean that still kind of ties into track too. you know what I'm saying. Track is my identity, I don't see myself outside of that right now.</p> <p>Music fades</p> <p>6:32</p>
<p>CU: Genesis locker label</p> <p>Text: 5 months later</p> <p>6:37</p>	<p>Music - Song: Suspect Located</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: In December, before our home meet I tweaked my hamstring.</p> <p>6:37</p>

<p>On Camera: Genesis Ewell (3)</p> <p>6:49</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: Which really sucked. And then we found out that I strained it, so I had been out for a month. Um, and then i tried to come back, and then I strained it again, probably worse.</p> <p>6:49</p>
<p>WS Genesis tying shoes in locker room</p> <p>6:58</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: Dealing with the hamstring strain has kind of been like mentally draining</p> <p>6:58</p>
<p>MS of Genesis stretching hamstring on ground.</p> <p>7:02</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>for me. Because I've never been like seriously injured.</p> <p>7:02</p>
<p>MS Genesis kick backs</p> <p>7:09</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: It's minor. It takes a couple weeks for that to heal but for me that's a big deal because I have all these goals that I wanted to achieve and that kind of</p> <p>7:09</p>

<p>On Camera: Genesis Ewell (3)</p> <p>7:19</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>brought me back a few steps. And now I'm just kind of like, I'm not even where I need to be, so like is pro even really an option right now.</p> <p>7:19</p>
<p>Push on stack of books</p> <p>7:24</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: Grad school is always an option.</p> <p>7:24</p>
<p>WS of Genesis skipping</p> <p>7:28</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: I know we talked about me going professional at some point.</p> <p>7:28</p>
<p>MS Genesis hunched over</p> <p>7:30</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: Uh, that's still kind of a TBD.</p> <p>7:30</p>
<p>MCU Genesis looks up at camera</p> <p>Fade to black</p> <p>7:35</p>	<p>Music fades</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: But grad school at the end of the day is still the goal</p> <p>7:35</p>

<p>Fade from black</p> <p>Drone shot flying up from stairs to baseball field</p> <p>Text: I think people think, I am just an athlete.</p> <p>7:49</p>	<p>Music - Song: Momentum</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: I think people think, I am just an athlete. Like what do I do after sports, and i thought that way as well. Like, what do I do after baseball?</p> <p>Music fades</p> <p>7:49</p>
<p>Photo: Henry's dad in basketball uniform</p> <p>7:55</p>	<p>Music - Song: Song of Mirrors</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: My dad played college basketball. His whole side of the family is very like, they've been college athletes.</p> <p>7:55</p>
<p>On Camera: Henry Boeckmann</p> <p>Lower third title</p> <p>8:00</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>All of them went to play college. So like obviously he drove sports into our lives.</p> <p>8:00</p>
<p>Photo: Henry & dad</p> <p>8:05</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: I can't remember a time when wasn't playing. Fall, summer, winter; always playing.</p> <p>8:05</p>

<p>Photo: Henry pitching as a kid</p> <p>8:10</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Always playing something. Basketball soccer, baseball. Love watching sports and love playing it.</p> <p>8:10</p>
<p>On Camera: Henry Boeckmann</p> <p>8:15</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>It's just, it is my life. Like, can't see anything else outside of it.</p> <p>8:15</p>
<p>Photo: Henry pitching in high school</p> <p>8:20</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: I was never a big baseball player growing up. I was very like heavily based on basketball because my dad played.</p> <p>8:20</p>
<p>On Camera: Henry Boeckmann</p> <p>8:25</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>And so I think that kind drove a lot to it.</p> <p>8:25</p>

<p>On Camera: Henry Boeckmann (2)</p> <p>8:33</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: But he also put a ton of pressure on me playing. So I think it was one of the reasons I quit; and our high school coaching.</p> <p>8:33</p>
<p>Photo: Henry pointing glove at camera</p> <p>8:38</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>And then I just solely became focused on baseball my sophomore year.</p> <p>8:38</p>
<p>On Camera: Henry Boeckmann</p> <p>8:43</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: Burnout I think by far was the biggest thing. I think...</p> <p>8:43</p>
<p>On Camera: Henry Boeckmann (2)</p> <p>8:48</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>I put more pressure on myself than I needed to with basketball. I think that led, I think that was one of the big reasons why...</p> <p>8:48</p>

<p>On Camera: Henry Boeckmann</p> <p>8:53</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>I ended up quitting. When baseball was always that sport I just played.</p> <p>8:53</p>
<p>Photo: Henry smiling</p> <p>8:58</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: And I love playing and I was good at it.</p> <p>8:58</p>
<p>On Camera: Henry Boeckmann</p> <p>9:03</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>And so, I was just super competitive as a pitcher and it was just fun to just be up there.</p> <p>I always found it, I don't know...</p> <p>9:03</p>
<p>Photo: Henry sticking tongue out</p> <p>9:09</p>	<p>There was just like something about it. Like I didn't think it would be the sport I go to college for.</p> <p>Music fades</p> <p>9:09</p>

<p>MLS of Henry warming up</p> <p>9:17</p>	<p>Music - Song: Boat Floating</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: The jump from high school to college is like unbelievably huge. It is way harder.</p> <p>9:17</p>
<p>Photo: Henry pitching in SIU uniform</p> <p>9:22</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: I came in at 170, 6'5, 6'6, looked like a twig.</p> <p>9:22</p>
<p>Photo: Baseball team flexing in weight room</p> <p>9:27</p> <p>Cross dissolve</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: Like you could snap me easily. These guys were putting up serious weight in the weight room where I was not....</p> <p>9:27</p>
<p>MCU of hands grabbing barbell</p> <p>9:32</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>At all. And it was like a massive...</p> <p>9:32</p>
<p>On Camera: Henry Boeckmann</p> <p>9:36</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>overwhelming. Like, I don't know if like, i am ready for this.</p> <p>9:36</p>

<p>On Camera: Henry Boeckmann (2)</p> <p>9:41</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: I think people just like don't give enough credit to student athletes; whatever sport they play.</p> <p>Music Fades</p> <p>9:41</p>
<p>Photo sequence: Henry's SIU yearly photos</p> <p>9:50</p>	<p>Music - Song: The Quiet Aftermath</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: I had probably figured out I was quitting right after my junior year...</p> <p>9:50</p>
<p>Photo: Henry pitching</p> <p>9:51</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>probably a fourth of the way through the season when I hadn't pitched. I still hadn't pitched forever.</p> <p>9:51</p>
<p>Photo: Henry pitching from the side</p> <p>9:58</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: I feel like I did everything I could. I just still wasn't seeing the field.</p> <p>9:58</p>

<p>WS Henry and teammates catching balls</p> <p>10:07</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>NATS</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: I think I could like convince myself that like it wasn't over. That like I still had another game.</p> <p>10:07</p>
<p>On Camera: Henry Boeckmann (2)</p> <p>10:11</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: Or just something, I don't what it was. But when I did get down and kneel and pray one more time.</p> <p>10:11</p>
<p>On Camera: Henry Boeckmann</p> <p>10:16</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Like it hit me, like hard. I was like, I own't ever get to do this again.</p> <p>10:16</p>
<p>MCU of hat and glove on bench</p> <p>10:21</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Like, did i enjoy it as much as I could have?</p> <p>10:21</p>

<p>MCU Henry walking field</p> <p>10:26</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: Like, I feel like I tried to hide it. Like I tried to just act normal at games.</p> <p>10:26</p>
<p>WS Henry pitching game action</p> <p>10:36</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Just because I didn't want it to be like... I didn't want to think about it and get emotional about it. And not enjoy it as much. So I tried to hide myself from this emotional feeling.</p> <p>10:36</p>
<p>MS Henry walking off field</p> <p>10:44</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>And, like that game, I just couldn't. Like, I didn't like ball my eyes out.</p> <p>10:44</p>
<p>On Camera: Henry Boeckmann</p> <p>10:51</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: But like, I'm a person who gets like teary-eyed. It's very rare for me to like cry a ton. I don't know if it's the masculinity thing, like I try to hide it.</p> <p>10:51</p>

<p>On Camera: Henry Boeckmann (2)</p> <p>10:59</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>But, yeah, it like hit me like a wall. And like that whole like drive home, that was all that was on my mind.</p> <p>10:59</p>
<p>On Camera: Henry Boeckmann</p> <p>11:09</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Like, I wanted to be like happy. Be like whatever. Talk to the guys on the bus. But like, it was just sitting in my head, like I'm done.</p> <p>11:09</p>
<p>B&W push to solo shot of baseball glove</p> <p>11:14</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: It's hard. It's like this huge, granted it's like this huge weight lifted off my chest.</p> <p>11:14</p>
<p>B&W pan across fence and baseball gear</p> <p>11:20</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>All this hard work, I don't have to worry about that anymore. But it also, just like...</p> <p>11:20</p>

<p>On Camera: Henry Boeckmann</p> <p>11:29</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: I don't even know how to describe it. It was like everything just rushed into my body. And just like woah.</p> <p>Music fades</p> <p>11:29</p>
<p>WS of Henry pitching</p> <p>11:32</p>	<p>Music - Song: All I've Ever Felt All At Once</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: It definitely sucks not having it in your life.</p> <p>11:32</p>
<p>WS of Henry pitching in game</p> <p>11:38</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: Like you don't realize, you don't realize how much that was a part of your life. like that was your life.</p> <p>11:38</p>
<p>Photo: Henry sitting on bench</p> <p>11:46</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: So I hope , I can find something that does like, I don't know yet what it'll be.</p> <p>11:46</p>

<p>On Camera: Henry Boeckmann</p> <p>Fade to black</p> <p>11:56</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>But uh, yeah. I just hope I can find something that can be the same thing baseball was; or any sport was to me.</p> <p>Music fades</p> <p>11:56</p>
<p>Fade from black</p> <p>Photo: Drew as a little boy in soccer uniform</p> <p>11:58</p>	<p>Music - Song: We Will Be</p> <p>11:58</p>
<p>Photo: Drew playing basketball</p> <p>12:01</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>12:01</p>
<p>Photo: Drew playing baseball</p> <p>12:04</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>12:04</p>

<p>MS following Drew on golf course with bag of clubs</p> <p>12:14</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: I always identify myself as an athlete. Like, I'm an athlete. And, I think as an athlete, something that you do is you continue to challenge yourself and you kind of push yourself to the limits just to see..</p> <p>12:14</p>
<p>MCU of Drew stretching</p> <p>12:19</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>you know, if you even have a breaking point. You kind of feel invisible and just want to go, go, go.</p> <p>12:19</p>
<p>MS of Drew swinging golf club</p> <p>12:28</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>NATS of wind and golf swing</p> <p>Music fades</p> <p>12:28</p>
<p>Photo: Drew playing baseball</p> <p>12:33</p>	<p>Music - Song: Drift</p> <p>Drew Novara: My dad was a baseball and basketball coach.</p> <p>12:33</p>

<p>Photo Split: Drew playing baseball/basketball</p> <p>12:38</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>And so, baseball and basketball were pretty, that was pretty much my childhood.</p> <p>12:38</p>
<p>On camera: Drew Novara (2)</p> <p>12:41</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: Going though middle school, I always wanted that label of ‘Oh that guy’s an athlete.</p> <p>12:41</p>
<p>On camera: Drew Novara</p> <p>Lower third title</p> <p>12:49</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: That guy’s a three sport athlete, like dang.’ Um, I always wanted that on my resume and you know, to be identified as that.</p> <p>12:49</p>
<p>Photo: Drew swinging golf club</p> <p>12:54</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: I had golfed a little bit as a kid.</p> <p>12:54</p>

<p>Photo of Drew and dad</p> <p>12:59</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: Like my dad took me to a par three course in Johnson City. And so, somewhat familiar with the game; I've watched it.</p> <p>12:59</p>
<p>MCU of golf swing</p> <p>13:07</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Um, always been a Tiger Woods fan, so I was just like..</p> <p>Let's give this golf thing a shot. From there, just kind of fell in love with it</p> <p>13:07</p>
<p>On camera: Drew Novara</p> <p>13:10</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>and really never looked back.</p> <p>Music fades</p> <p>13:10</p>
<p>Photo of Drew looking through binoculars</p> <p>13:18</p>	<p>Music - Song: Postcards</p> <p>Drew Novara: From an individual basis, I currently am tied with two other people for the lowest 18 hole score in school history.</p> <p>13:18</p>

<p>On camera: Drew Novara</p> <p>13:25</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: I shot a bogey-free 64 at Austin Peay's tournament my junior year of college</p> <p>13:25</p>
<p>Photo: SIU golf team photo Drew's sophomore year</p> <p>13:30</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: At that same tournament the year before,</p> <p>13:30</p>
<p>Photo: Drew smiling at golf course</p> <p>13:35</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>instead of 64, I shot a 67. It added up to a 273.</p> <p>13:35</p>
<p>Photo: Golf team sitting on a hill</p> <p>13:40</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: And, as we looked into the record book, that was the lowest team score in school history.</p> <p>13:40</p>
<p>Photo: Golf team on golf cart</p> <p>13:45</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: That still stands today.</p> <p>13:45</p>

<p>On camera: Drew Novara</p> <p>13:55</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: To say that, my team, my sophomore year still holds a record for lowest team score in school history is something I'm very proud of.</p> <p>13:55</p>
<p>Photo: Golf team that won MVC championship</p> <p>14:01</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: Part of the first conference title in school history. Got to make our first regional appearance,</p> <p>14:01</p>
<p>Photo: Golf team on bench</p> <p>14:06</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>we went down to Alabama. That's the first time SIU men's golf has</p> <p>14:06</p>
<p>Photo: Drew golf swing</p> <p>14:11</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>has made an NCAA post season. Playing some summer golf by myself,</p> <p>14:11</p>
<p>On camera: Drew Novara</p> <p>14:16</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: I qualified for back-to-back United States Amateur Golf Tournaments.</p> <p>14:16</p>

<p>On camera: Drew Novara (2)</p> <p>14:23</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: It's the biggest amateur golf tournament in the world, so being able to qualify for it once is awesome, but to go back-to-back..</p> <p>14:23</p>
<p>On camera: Drew Novara</p> <p>Whip transition</p> <p>14:28</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Was, um, something remarkable. Uh, something I'll never forget. Um, absolutely loved it.</p> <p>Fade music</p> <p>14:28</p>

<p>Tracking shot, following Drew on golf course</p> <p>15:02</p>	<p>Music - Song: Missing</p> <p>NATS of wind</p> <p>Drew Novara: I didn't really see myself, I didn't really see any joy or peace in life to travel the country. I didn't really make, feel like I wanted to make that financial commitment of gas, vehicle, hotels, food. All of that is on the road. And then, on top of that, the entry fee it takes to get into golf tournaments. I didn't really want to make the commitment. And it wasn't something I was excited to do. And so the end of my college career was a little bit bittersweet for me.</p> <p>Music Fades</p> <p>15:02</p>
<p>On camera: Drew Novara</p> <p>15:12</p>	<p>Music - song: Escape</p> <p>Drew Novara: I kind of hit a little bit of a burnout period to where I was fortunate enough to work at Kokopelli, over in Marion right after I graduated.</p> <p>15:12</p>

<p>On Camera: Justin Fetcho</p> <p>Lower third title</p> <p>15:19</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Justin Fetcho: We want them to be the best when they're here, but we also want to be able to help them transition into...</p> <p>15:19</p>
<p>MCU of Drew's face</p> <p>15:33</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>You know, they understand that maybe professional golf is not for them, but they still kind of want to be involved. And maybe that's in a coaching capacity. Maybe that's doing, being a head pro at a golf course and what that might entail.</p> <p>15:33</p>
<p>MS following Drew on course</p> <p>17:38</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: It's something I've always loved. I always wanted to be around it, but for a good, two to three weeks of actually working there,</p> <p>17:38</p>

<p>On camera: Drew Novara</p> <p>15:44</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>I didn't even step on the golf course. I was like, no.</p> <p>15:44</p>
<p>Tracking shot around Drew prepping to swing</p> <p>16:11</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: When the pressure of golf starts getting up there. Starts to show its teeth a little bit, is about where I would change a bit as a person. I felt like, I took a lot of things for granted and got way more self centered, um, whenever that stuff would happen so. Getting away from that atmosphere I think has made me a better person than I think.</p> <p>16:11</p>
<p>MS of golf swing</p> <p>16:20</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: I think until you've actually lived it, I don't think you understand the pressure of...</p> <p>16:20</p>

<p>MCU follow Drew in slow motion</p> <p>16:23</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>having all that time consumed in one day.</p> <p>16:23</p>
<p>WS of golf swing from behind</p> <p>16:26</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: And the pressure of making sure at the right place at the right time every single time.</p> <p>16:26</p>
<p>CU of golf swing from behind slow motion</p> <p>16:30</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: Once the final whistle blows,</p> <p>16:30</p>
<p>On camera: Drew Novara</p> <p>16:39</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>the ball stops bouncing, whatever you want to call it. Whatever analogy you want to use.</p> <p>Once that stops for you, making that transition is kind of hard because, like I said,</p> <p>16:39</p>

<p>MS of golf ball going into hole</p> <p>16:45</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>my dad was a coach. And for 22 years of my life, I've been known as an athlete.</p> <p>NATS of golf ball</p> <p>16:45</p>
<p>On camera: Drew Novara</p> <p>Fade to black</p> <p>16:50</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: It's scary to not know where you're going next.</p> <p>Music Fades</p> <p>16:50</p>
<p>MS graduation caps</p> <p>Animated quote</p> <p>17:03</p>	<p>Music - Song: Dark</p> <p>NATS</p> <p>Connor James: We're all a product of something.</p> <p>17:03</p>
<p>Animated quote continue</p> <p>MS of football team locker room</p> <p>17:08</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Quote continued: I'm a product of my community, my family, my teammates, and all this coaches I had.</p> <p>Music fades</p> <p>17:08</p>

<p>Photo: Connor James in Saluki football gear</p> <p>17:14</p>	<p>Music - Song: Forces of Attraction</p> <p>Connor James: I was a linebacker here from 2007 to 2011.</p> <p>17:14</p>
<p>Photo: Connor James handing off football</p> <p>17:19</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Connor James:I know for a fact I can count on one hand the amount the...</p> <p>17:19</p>
<p>On camera: Connor James</p> <p>Lower third title</p> <p>17:25</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>it's less than three, the amount of college or high school football games that my mom missed.</p> <p>17:25</p>
<p>Photo: Connor & mom</p> <p>17:30</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Connor James: So she support wise, just an incredible, my mom, my grandparents...</p> <p>17:30</p>
<p>On camera: Connor James</p> <p>17:40</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>My dad was actually passed away at that point. But from a support stand point, I had a lot of love and support.</p> <p>Fade music</p> <p>17:40</p>

<p>Fade from black</p> <p>Photo: Connor & dad</p> <p>17:45</p>	<p>Music - Song: Alive</p> <p>Connor James: When my dad passed away, he passed away suddenly when I was 13 years old.</p> <p>17:45</p>
<p>Photo: Connor & dad at football game</p> <p>17:50</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Connor James: He loved watching me play football.</p> <p>17:50</p>
<p>Photo: Connor playing defense</p> <p>17:55</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Connor James: I think I always felt like I was playing for him a little bit, and it did drive me.</p> <p>17:55</p>
<p>On camera: Connor James</p> <p>18:11</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Connor James: I know it did. There was, especially through high school, I was just driven to do really well and keep working really hard. Because I felt like that's what he would have wanted me to do.</p> <p>Music Fades</p> <p>18:11</p>

<p>Photo: Connor playing defense</p> <p>18:15</p>	<p>Music - Song: Overcome</p> <p>Connor James: And, I felt like in a way I was making him proud by continuing to develop into</p> <p>18:15</p>
<p>On camera: Connor James</p> <p>18:19</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>a hopefully, a good player.</p> <p>18:19</p>
<p>Past game footage of Connor intercepting football</p> <p>18:31</p>	<p>Music continue</p> <p>Mike Reis: There's the snap, they're going to fake it. Picked off Connor James! He might score! 35, 30, 25, 20!</p> <p>18:31</p>
<p>Past game footage of Connor tackling</p> <p>18:37</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Connor James: One of the things that Coach Kill and that told me why they recruited me...</p> <p>18:37</p>
<p>On camera: Connor James</p> <p>18:42</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>is because I played the game with passion and it showed up on film.</p> <p>Music fades</p> <p>18:42</p>

<p>Photo: Connor in game facing camera</p> <p>18:47</p>	<p>Music - Song: Bernie Love</p> <p>18:47</p>
<p>Photo Connor tackling</p> <p>18:51</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>18:51</p>
<p>Animated text graphic</p> <p>MCU Saluki dumbbells</p> <p>18:55</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Connor James: Control the things you can control, which is your attitude and effort.</p> <p>18:55</p>
<p>Photo: Connor escaping defender</p> <p>19:01</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Connor James: When the student athlete part came to an end there was some peace kind of in my soul.</p> <p>19:01</p>
<p>Photo: Connor tackling player</p> <p>19:05</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Connor James: I wasn't excited to be done, but I do think i was able to find...</p> <p>19:05</p>

<p>On camera: Connor James</p> <p>19:08</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>just a gratitude for the people...</p> <p>19:08</p>
<p>Photo: Connor & teammates</p> <p>19:13</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>the support, and all the people that kind of helped get me to that point.</p> <p>19:13</p>
<p>Photo: Connor & family at graduation</p> <p>19:18</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Connor James: And have a really enjoyable life shaping experience as a student athlete.</p> <p>19:18</p>
<p>Photo: Connor & teammates holding trophy</p> <p>19:23</p>	<p>Music fades</p> <p>19:23</p>

<p>Animated text</p> <p>WS of Saluki Stadium crowd</p> <p>19:42</p>	<p>Music - Song: The Edge of Nowhere</p> <p>Connor James: You're so focused, you're so committed, and you'r so invested in being a student athlete, you're focused on your grades, you're focused on getting better on the field, that sometimes you don't think about that next chapter, that next phase.</p> <p>19:42</p>
<p>On camera: Connor James</p> <p>19:58</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Connor James: So for me, I came here, like I said... Think about this, probably the most traumatic event I'll ever experience happened just five, six years before I got to SIU.</p> <p>19:58</p>
<p>B&W MCU of football helmet.</p> <p>20:01</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Connor James: So, I'm a freshman. I'm displaced from my community.</p> <p>20:01</p>

<p>Drone shot with animated photo of Connor & dad.</p> <p>20:15</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Connor James: I'm wishing that my dad would be able to come watch em play college football. And, I had to grow up. I made mistakes. I think what was really important,</p> <p>20:15</p>
<p>Tilt shot of family photos by Connor's desk</p> <p>20:28</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Connor James: I talked about those good people. The good people around me. From all different phases of life. Growth just takes place by being committed and wanting to grow.</p> <p>20:28</p>
<p>Old footage of team entering</p> <p>20:35</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Connor James: As a student athlete I think I went through a progression of no idea what I wanted to do,</p> <p>20:35</p>

<p>On camera: Connor James</p> <p>20:47</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>the vast majority of the time I was a student athlete, I was not focused on what the phase looks like. I wasn't worried about it, which I think can be a good thing, I think. You're not concerned about it.</p> <p>Music fades</p> <p>20:47</p>
<p>3D animation of Connor "drifting"</p> <p>20:55</p>	<p>Music - Song: Awake</p> <p>Connor James But, I would say, I drifted. In that area, thinking professionally, I drifted.</p> <p>20:55</p>
<p>Still: Presidents Academic Excellence Award</p> <p>20:59</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Connor James: People would not have said that about me with my approach to academics,</p> <p>20:59</p>
<p>Still: 2011 Southern Illinois Football Harry Bobbitt Spirit Award</p> <p>21:02</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>and my approach to being an athlete.</p> <p>21:02</p>

<p>On camera: Connor James</p> <p>21:08</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Connor James: So, that transition was tough. I was very fortunate and blessed because of relationships when I,</p> <p>21:08</p>
<p>Photo: Connor & family at graduation</p> <p>21:17</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>even finishing my master's degree opportunity. I was a graduate assistant. Every job that I've had, has been</p> <p>21:17</p>
<p>On camera: Connor James</p> <p>Fade to black</p> <p>21:34</p>	<p>Music continues:</p> <p>'can you trust him? Can he, is he going to work hard?' Some of those same attributes, if I link it back to being a student athlete that I did really well when I was focused on the athletic experience, uh, I think have come through a little bit professionally.</p> <p>Music fades</p> <p>21:34</p>

<p>Fade from black</p> <p>Drone shot outside baseball field</p> <p>21:37</p>	<p>Music - Song: The Long Voyage To Outer Space</p> <p>21:37</p>
<p>Henry warming up on the mound</p> <p>21:41</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>21:41</p>
<p>Henry walking graduation stage</p> <p>21:50</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: I think if you look at like the literature that's out there on athletes leaving the sport role..</p> <p>21:50</p>
<p>On camera: Julie Partridge</p> <p>21:59</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>there is a tremendous amount of overlay with how you see it looked at compared to, again people with any kind of major life transition..</p> <p>21:59</p>

<p>Drone flies of football field</p> <p>Text animation</p> <p>22:12</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Which can put people at risk for having issues with mental health because you're talking about changing something pretty significant about their life.</p> <p>22:12</p>
<p>Cant shot of football helmet in locker</p> <p>22:19</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: Okay, you're done, and you're never going to put that jersey on again can just be jarring.</p> <p>22:19</p>
<p>MS Genesis in starting position</p> <p>22:23</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: And we want to make sure people feel supported moving forward.</p> <p>22:23</p>
<p>WS of students in study section</p> <p>22:27</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: When we try to help somebody transition from anything, it's not about okay, well, um...</p> <p>22:27</p>

<p>On camera: Julie Partridge</p> <p>22:38</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Now you're past the transition, so let's to try to deal with it, but rather, how do we prepare you? How are you making the transition, and what happens afterwards that we may need to help.</p> <p>Music fades</p> <p>22:38</p>
<p>Henry sitting at graduation</p> <p>22:45</p>	<p>Music - Song: Soaring High</p> <p>Julie Partridge: There are a few things. For an athlete to make a successful transition, first of all I think it's important that we,</p> <p>22:45</p>
<p>WS of graduation</p> <p>22:53</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>being prepared to leave college and enter the work force in whatever way that is. One of the things I think a lot of transitional</p> <p>22:53</p>

<p>On camera: Julie Partridge</p> <p>23:02</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: try to capitalize on is to help athletes see how their athletic experience puts them in a position to be ready to move on.</p> <p>23:02</p>
<p>Enhancement strategies animation</p> <p>23:14</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: So enhancement strategies are how do we help to enhance some of the things that people are bringing in with them so again like most athletes are hard workers.</p> <p>23:14</p>
<p>On camera: Julie Partridge</p> <p>23:18</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: So how can we sort of apply that to other areas.</p> <p>23:18</p>

<p>Support strategies animation</p> <p>23:31</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: You know with supports no we want to make sure that we have people again in place or, or support mechanisms I guess in place for helping people when they're getting ready to make the transition out so again whether that's help..</p> <p>23:31</p>
<p>Resume animation</p> <p>23:43</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>with things like resume building. How can we take what an athlete potentially has been doing for four years and then apply it ,like how can I highlight those things or how can they capitalize on those things.</p> <p>23:43</p>
<p>MCU hand on laptop mousepad</p> <p>23:46</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: Um again, like finding internships...</p> <p>23:46</p>

<p>Laptop screen scrolling through graduate schools</p> <p>23:50</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>or, um, applying to graduate school or those types of things.</p> <p>23:50</p>
<p>Counseling strategies animation</p> <p>24:03</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: And then counseling wise, again some of that might happen, you know, prior to the, the transition but how are we going to put somethings in place that if people are struggling with that transition that we make sure that they are...</p> <p>24:03</p>
<p>On camera: Julie Partridge</p> <p>24:08</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>that they have resources in place to help them make the transition more effectively.</p> <p>Music fades</p> <p>24:08</p>
<p>WS indoor track</p> <p>24:13</p>	<p>Music - Song: Thunderstorm</p> <p>Julie Partridge: They understand what it takes to...</p> <p>24:13</p>

<p>CU kettleballs</p> <p>24:19</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>to fit a lot of things into a day, you know, they sort of have to be able to do that.</p> <p>24:19</p>
<p>WS of football huddle in locker room</p> <p>24:24</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: Being able to work with ,you know, people from a lot of different backgrounds, having taken on leadership roles before.</p> <p>24:24</p>
<p>Kid tackles football player</p> <p>24:29</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>NATS</p> <p>Julie Partridge: establishing connections and relationships in the community doing community service.</p> <p>24:29</p>
<p>Kids play 1v1 and football players get excited</p> <p>24:37</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>NATS</p> <p>Julie Partridge: Helping people to see that okay just because you're athletic you know career is over,</p> <p>24:37</p>

<p>On camera: Julie Partridge</p> <p>24:41</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>those skills can transfer over to what you're doing next.</p> <p>24:41</p>
<p>MS of golf putt</p> <p>24:48</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: When people feel like I don't want to complain about anything I don't want to...</p> <p>24:48</p>
<p>MCU of barbell</p> <p>24:51</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: people to think I can't handle this or that this is something that I'm...</p> <p>24:51</p>
<p>MS of Genesis using foam roller</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>struggling with, it just makes it that much harder than for people to say afterwards like this, I am not doing well with this. And again I like to think that that's changing but,</p> <p>25:03</p>

<p>Drew doing practice swings</p> <p>25:08</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: But can feel really isolating at times like, I'm the only one who feels this way. Everyone else seems like they're,</p> <p>25:08</p>
<p>On camera: Julie Partridge</p> <p>25:20</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>they've retired, everyone's happy, and loving life that they don't have to go to practice when you know, you may have several people that are actually struggling with it but they're putting on a brave face.</p> <p>25:20</p>
<p>On camera: Henry Boeckmann</p> <p>25:28</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: I would almost more rather hold it in myself. I don't know why. I think, and that's the problem. I think a lot of athletes are like that where they like to hold it in.</p> <p>25:28</p>

<p>On Camera: Genesis Ewell</p> <p>25:31</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: Definitely, definitely talk to somebody.</p> <p>25:31</p>
<p>On Camera: Genesis Ewell (2)</p> <p>25:36</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: No one is going to know what's wrong with you if you don't open your mouth. My mom always told me a closed mouth don't get fed.</p> <p>Music fades</p> <p>25:36</p>
<p>On camera: Drew Novara</p> <p>25:43</p>	<p>Music - Song: Cinematic Trailer</p> <p>Drew Novara: You know, if that's all you've know your whole life, that is going to be a difficult transition. And for the people that are on the outside looking in...</p> <p>25:43</p>

<p>Drew bent over</p> <p>25:49</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>if you had to stop exactly what you were doing say you got your engineering degree and become an engineer at a firm, whatever. If you had to stop that right now, and say all of that is done and behind you, like you'd be lost.</p> <p>25:49</p>
<p>On camera: Drew Novara</p> <p>25:53</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: And it's a very very difficult transition to make.</p> <p>25:53</p>
<p>Slow motion Genesis lifting barbell</p> <p>25:59</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>25:59</p>
<p>Henry warming up in bullpen</p> <p>26:01</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: It just, it does come down to understanding...</p> <p>26:01</p>

<p>WS of Drew swinging on golf course</p> <p>26:04</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>that you are, you are an athlete.</p> <p>NATS</p> <p>26:04</p>
<p>On camera: Julie Partridge</p> <p>26:15</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: It would never be something where we would expect people to not feel like that's an important part of who they are. But I would encourage people to remember that that is only one part of who you are.</p> <p>26:15</p>
<p>Drone shot of soccer/track field</p> <p>26:23</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Justin Fetcho: You can talk about other things you see them doing. Other things where you can see them being successful and I think that's important too.</p> <p>26:23</p>

<p>OTS of Drew working on computer</p> <p>26:28</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Justin Fetcho: You can't be so streamlined into thinking someone can do one thing and one thing only. I think if they have some options...</p> <p>26:28</p>
<p>On camera: Justin Fetcho</p> <p>26:31</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>I think it's good for them to be able to hear that.</p> <p>26:31</p>
<p>On camera: Julie Partridge</p> <p>26:46</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Julie Partridge: There are so many things that you are as a person, interests that you have, qualities that you bring to the table that go well beyond what you can do on your team or in your sport.</p> <p>Music fades</p> <p>26:46</p>

<p>On Camera: Genesis Ewell</p> <p>26:53</p>	<p>Music - Song: The Epic Mind</p> <p>Genesis Ewell: My name is Genesis. I'm a track & field athlete, a cat lover, an influencer, and I am more than an athlete.</p> <p>26:53</p>
<p>On Camera: Henry Boeckmann</p> <p>27:05</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Henry Boeckmann: I'm Henry Boeckmann. I'm a marketer, a hiker, and a died hard STL native, 314, and I am more than an athlete.</p> <p>27:05</p>
<p>On camera: Drew Novara</p> <p>27:11</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Drew Novara: My name is Drew Novara. I'm a young professional, a future husband, and a Christian, and I am more than an athlete.</p> <p>27:11</p>
<p>On camera: Connor James</p> <p>Fade to black</p> <p>27:20</p>	<p>Music continues</p> <p>Connor James: I'm Connor James. I'm a Christ follower, a husband, a servant, and I am more than an athlete.</p> <p>27:20</p>

Credits	Music continues
Fade to black	Music fades
28:00	28:00

PART 3
MUSIC CUE SHEET

#	Name	Usage	Time In	TimeOut	Duration	ArtistName	Source
1	I'm Just Good	BV	00:01	00:045	00:44	Johnny Grimes	YouTube Audio Library
2	Adrift	BI	00:46	2:56	2:10	ELPHNT	YouTube Audio Library
3	Heaven and Hell	BI	2:57	3:39	00:42	Jeremy Blake	YouTube Audio Library
4	Chef Brian	BI	3:33	4:07	00:34	LATASHA	YouTube Audio Library
5	Slow Hammer	BI	4:02	5:36	1:34	The Mini Vandals	YouTube Audio Library
6	Muffled Tines	BI	5:33	6:40	1:07	Roljui	YouTube Audio Library
7	Suspect Located	BI	6:29	7:36	1:07	Scott Holmes	Free Music Archive
8	Monument	BI	7:36	7:52	00:16	TrackTribe	YouTube Audio Library
9	Song of Mirrors	BI	7:48	9:11	1:23	Unicorn Heads	YouTube Audio Library
10	Boat Floating	BI	9:04	9:57	00:53	Puddle of Infinity	YouTube Audio Library
11	The Quiet Aftermath	BI	9:42	11:44	2:02	Sir Cubworth	YouTube Audio Library
12	All I've Ever Felt at Once	BI	11:15	12:01	00:46	Jesse Cale	YouTube Audio Library

#	Name	Usage	Time In	TimeOut	Duration	ArtistName	Source
13	We Will Be	BI	11:52	12:39	00:47	Puddle of Infinity	YouTube Audio Library
14	Drift	BI	12:24	13:10	00:46	Scott Holmes	Free Music Archive
15	Postcards	BI	13:10	14:30	1:20	Scott Holmes	Free Music Archive
16	Missing	BI	14:31	14:58	00:27	Scott Holmes	Free Music Archive
17	Escape	BI	14:52	16:55	2:03	Scott Holmes	Free Music Archive
18	Dark	BI	16:48	17:14	00:26	Brian Rehan	RFM YouTube
19	Force of Attraction	BI	17:06	17:41	00:35	Scott Holmes	Free Music Archive
20	Alive	BI	17:36	18:05	00:29	Thomas Green	No Copyright Music YouTube
21	Overcome	BI	18:04	18:50	00:46	Ugonna Onyekwe	YouTube Audio Library
22	Bernie Love	BI	18:36	19:24	00:48	Ashley Shadow	YouTube Audio Library
23	Awake	BI	20:39	21:32	00:53	Scott Holmes	Free Music Archive
24	The Long Voyage To Outer Space	BI	21:31	23:00	1:29	Sir Cubworth	YouTube Audio Library

#	Name	Usage	Time In	TimeOut	Duration	ArtistName	Source
25	Soaring High	BI	22:32	24:07	1:35	Biz Baz Studio	YouTube Audio Library
26	Thunderstorm	BI	24:01	25:31	1:30	Hanu Dixit	YouTube Audio Library
27	Cinematic Trailer	BI	25:20	26:59	1:39	Scott Holmes	Free Music Archive
28	The Epic Mind	BI	26:32	28:00	1:28	Nazar Rybak	Free Music Archive

PART 4
CREDITS

ROLE	NAME
Greg Camillone	Producer/Editor
Jan Thompson	Project Advisor
Brad Gray	Production Assistant
Genesis Ewell	Interviewee 1
Henry Boeckmann	Interviewee 2
Drew Novara	Interviewee 3
Connor James	Interviewee 4
Julie Partridge	Interviewee 5
Justin Fetcho	Interviewee 6

RESEARCH REPORT

Limited data exists in college athletics about mental health conditions, while physical health remains the higher priority. In order to contribute to the limited understanding of student-athletes' cognitive behavior, a short nonfiction documentary is produced to help bring awareness.

The purpose of this project is to illustrate the emotions and personal experiences of Division I student-athletes discussing their transitions from their athletic identity to a new one. In addition, it will explore the attitude and roles student-athletes have taken on throughout their transitional period. It is hoped this documentary will encourage the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and college athletic programs to discuss, care, and take priority of not only post graduation preparation, but mental health conditions that may occur when a student-athlete's role as an athlete comes to an end. The aim is to educate and encourage institutions to implement academic and career counselors, and sports psychologists in order to properly prepare for the professional world, and prevent and treat mental illnesses.

According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suicide was the tenth leading cause of death in the U.S. and the second leading cause of death for people aged 15-24 in 2016. Among children who committed suicide, more than 90 percent had a mental health condition (Mental Health By The Numbers, n.d.). Specifically among collegiate student-athletes, 15 to 20 percent will suffer an episode of depression in their lifetime, and is among the most common condition sport psychiatrists encounter (Stull, 2017).

What I attempt to portray through this documentary are Division I student-athletes' narratives. Furthermore, the athletes' stories will serve as a combination of awareness and inspiration, serving as a reminder there are positive coping skills out there. The issue I hope to resolve here is

the neglecting and lack of attention spent toward mental care for student-athletes who deal with high expectations of performance on top of every day life. In addition, encourage athletes and their respective institutions to focus on preparing for life after sports; you can never prepare too early.

Athletic identity is the degree to which an individual identifies with the athlete role and looks to others for acknowledgement of that role (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993). That being said, when an athlete no longer participates in their sport, isolation is likely to occur. For instance, sport is a huge part of an athlete's time and social life. Finding something with the same passion and commitment is challenging.

Researchers have suggested 10 to 15 percent of American college student-athletes are dealing with issues significant enough to warrant the need for professional counseling services (Ferrante, Etzel, Lantz, 1996; Parham, 1993). Current NCAA statistics suggest more than 460,000 student athletes are competing in 24 sports every year. That being said, approximately 46,000 to 69,000 student-athletes are suffering enough mentally to warrant counseling assistance. Many of these issues are no different than the ones non-athletes face such as academically, emotionally, and personally. However, the additional athletic commitment and pressures of collegiate student-athletes impact their cognitive, social, moral, educational, and psychological development.

Although colleges often provide counseling services, athletes have developed the tendency to seek help from other sources such as coaches, teammates, family, and friends (Bird, Chow, Meir, Freeman, 2018). Coaches, teammates, family, and friends are not qualified mental health professionals and collegiate athletic programs need to become aware of the circumstances

which prevent their athletes from pursuing proper help. According to The Gallagher R. National Survey of Counseling Center Directors, the ratio of counselors to students is 1 to 1,906; smaller schools having the better ratios. On top of potentially limited access to a mental health professional, many limitations serve as a barrier which prevent student-athletes from seeking help. Hiring sports psychologists eliminate numerous barriers given their background and comprehension in sports participation, resulting in the athlete feeling better understood.

The motivation behind this project is to contribute to a community of research revolved around the mental health of collegiate student-athletes. Knowing more about the cognitive behavior can not only potentially save lives, but provides more of an opportunity to better treat for those suffering mentally and enhance performance. Furthermore, the extra effort of caring for your mental health has additional benefits than solely consulting about one's feeling which is often stigmatized as weak. Considering and preparing for one's future can begin to develop an alternative identity, which can help prevent the occurrence of mental illnesses occurring after graduation. In addition, the more we talk about feelings and emotions, the less likely it'll feel lonely when an athlete is experiencing what they are going through.

The college experience is life changing, and can be a heavy amount to handle. This project is conducted to add to the limited community of knowledge on collegiate student-athletes' cognitive behavior in order to encourage mental health become vitalized as much as physical health. The documentary shows how challenging transitioning out of sports can be for an athlete. However, it also proves how beneficial it can be to realize the athlete role is only one part of who you are, and how one can maximize those athletic experiences transitioning into life after sports.

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Bachelor of Arts, Communication, May 2018

Research Paper Title:
Athletic Identity

Major Professor: Jan Thompson