

Torn: Blackburn Tears Her ACL

By Katie Holme and
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Picture this: Danielle Blackburn faces a San Antonio volleyball team, not knowing what's going to happen next. Time stops. There's a pop, then she falls. Blackburn tears her ACL, a ligament in the knee that takes months of recovery and intensive surgery when torn.

"I had one surgery, but there was a complication," Blackburn said. "They were supposed to use my hamstring to replace my ACL, but they had to use

my quad muscle instead."

Blackburn played on the top team for Austin Junior Volleyball Club. As of now, Blackburn has been recovering from her injury for six months. She explains the events adding up to her injury.

"I was going up to hit the ball, and my main focus was to sprint to the outside of the court to block and I came down wrong, so I landed on my

opposite foot," Blackburn said. "I landed and it made a loud pop."

Blackburn explains what happened after she fell.

"I remember my dad sprinting down the stairs. My coach told me to lay on the ground."

Danielle Blackburn, 8

"Grayson, my teammate, told me I got a kill," Blackburn said. "I remember my dad sprinting down the stairs. My coach

told me to lay on the ground. They had to cut off one of my knee pads because it was too small because I forgot one at home, so I got one from the lost and found."

Throughout Blackburn's recovery her parents, family, and friends support-

ed her.

"My friends brought flowers, posters, Tiff's Treats, and stuck by my side through my recovery," Blackburn said.

Recovery for Blackburn meant a lot of physical therapy and wearing a large knee brace. Still recovering, she has to go to physical therapy every week.

"I go to physical therapy and practice exercises to strengthen my ACL," Blackburn said.

Blackburn was cleared for volleyball on January 22.

Dance Like Everyone Is Watching

By Taylor Austin and
Megan Ferguson

Many students at Gorzycki enjoy doing competitive dance outside of school. They train all year until the competition/convention season begins. Conventions start as early as November and end in around August. Competitions start in January at the earliest and end in August.

A convention is a week-end long event that includes multiple classes from a variety of teachers. At the end of the first day, you usually have an audition class where you try out for a scholarship. That scholarship can reduce the amount of money you have to pay for your next convention or give you a chance to attend an intensive.

Eighth grader Kamdyn Lyon competes and has favorite dance conventions.

"My favorite [convention] is 24 Seven because a lot of studios I know go to that convention," Lyon said.

Sixth grader Lauren Chou describes what it was like when she got her first scholarship.

"It was at the NOVU convention and I was really excited because I worked really hard to get the scholarship," Chou said.

Because each teacher has a different way of preparing their students for competition season, Chou describes what her teachers are like.

"It's hard sometimes

because your teacher yells at you and stretches you hard. Usually the next day I'm really sore," Chou said.

During competition season most teachers push their dancers harder than usual so they can perfect their dances. Seventh grader Sadah Young explains how she prepares for competition season.

"When we are getting ready for a competition we have to work extra hard so our dances look

perfect," Young said.

Most dancers have a favorite style of dance.

"My favorite style of dance is tap because you can use your body and let loose," Young said.

Not everyone has the same favorite style of dance.

"I really like contemporary because you can do a lot with it," Lyon said.

There are many ups and downs to being on a competitive dance team. Some

people think the hardest part isn't even the dancing aspect.

"It's really hard to actually get the motivation to get up and go to class instead of being lazy," Lyon said.

According to Young, there can be struggles with balancing school and dance.

"It is hard to balance things because I dance around eight hours a week and I still have to carve out time for school and homework, but I just prioritize my things and it seems to work," Young said.

There are many rewards to being part of a team.

"I enjoy the reward of being on a team and walking off the stage proud," Lyon said. "Some of the rewards of being on a team is just getting to know new people. I like to hang out with my friends and dancing with them."



Tigerettes member Kamdyn Lyon performs in the Winter Showcase. Photo by Ashley Johnson.