

Damage Done On, Off Field

Coaches, athletes discuss how injuries affect athletes

Malarie Ohrabka | Sports Editor

Whether in practice or games, high school athletes can become injured while participating in their school sport. While the severity of injuries and the long-term physical effects vary, their athletic futures can be affected.



photo by Kaitlyn Hutchins

Sophomore Gabriella Galvan normally plays for the Lady Tigers Junior Varsity team, but she is currently on crutches.

“Most athletes recover fully from their injuries and go on to live a normal life without experiencing any adverse effects,” head football coach Andrew Svoboda said. “Although I do realize there are always a few exceptions. In many times, as people age, their physical fitness levels decrease,

which can lead to other aches and pains.”

Injuries can contribute to the loss of a student’s playing time and can also lead to losing a scholarship or the ability to get one.

“Nine days before a Mid-Atlantic region showcase for college baseball, I tore my ACL [anterior cruciate ligament] and MCL [medial collateral ligament],” baseball player, senior Colin Laird said. “Because of this injury, I missed the most crucial recruiting period for future college athletes. Missing these defining months in my athletic career caused my chances of signing early, before my last high school season, to grow seemingly out of reach.

According to an excerpt from “Mind, Body and Sport: How Being Injured Affects Mental Health,” an article written by Margot Putukian, some student athletes can respond to injury by unmasking mental health issues, such as depression.

“I tore my ACL and medial meniscus,” varsity football player, junior Tyler Spillman said. “Honestly, the hardest part is overcoming the mental side of it, because whenever you have an injury of that caliber happen, you feel so weak. Your confidence level goes straight down to zero, and you just have to work all that back up. It’s really hard.”

An injury, depending on the severity of it, can stay with an athlete beyond high school, college, and potentially the rest of their life, according to Spillman.

“For the rest of my football career, if I play football past high school, I will have to wear a knee brace at least,” Spillman said. “And some movement is going to be limited.”

According to Svoboda, it is important that, as a coach, he makes injured students understand they are still part of the team and that their rehab process is only temporary.

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“Anytime a competitive person is told they must take a short break from the activity they love, it can be frustrating,” Svoboda said. “In some cases, [players] can push through the minor bumps and bruises, while other, more severe injuries need more attention. The athletes must stay connected emotionally to the team. Being able to stay engaged mentally is paramount, so when they return to the competitive setting, they simply knock off the physical rust and can jump right in the competition.”

According to Putukian’s article, recovery

from an injury is, in some cases, very difficult for an athlete to deal with both physically and mentally, and for some, time must be spent sitting on the bench.

“I have been going to physical therapy for nearly six months now, and, in short, [recovery] has been the hardest thing I’ve ever done,” Laird said. “What drives me is that there’s a chance of me still being a college athlete as long as I seize my opportunity in the springtime. In order to make my dream become a reality even after this nightmare, I have made sure that I work harder than ever before, every day. I only have one chance left and I know I couldn’t live with myself if I knew I didn’t do everything I could do to take advantage of it.”



photo by Kaitlyn Hutchins

High school athletes suffer from over 2 million injuries each year, according to statistics on the Southwest Athletic Trainers’ Association website.