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Virtual Curatorial Project

The theme I have chosen to display in my exhibition is student athlete mental health. I chose 7 different pictures that exemplify the dark side to playing college athletics. Student athletes give a countless amount of hours and so much energy into their sport. However, not a lot of people realize how mentally draining it really is. Nearly every athlete in highschool dreams about playing in college because people think that athletes are glorified and receive special treatment. They think being a college athlete will include popularity, a lot of partying, and be an opportunity to play the sport they love. However, for a vast majority of student athletes, this is far from the truth. With the exception of a couple football or basketball stars from power 5 schools, the other athletes are expected to do everything a normal student does with a lot higher expectations. It can lead student athletes to have a lot of mental health issues, and battle dealing with their emotions. In addition to this, many athletes finish their college experience with a newfound hatred for their sport because of everything it puts them through. This is such a huge part in every student's athlete life, yet it is rarely talked about among people. I wanted more people to see the side that most sports teams and universities try to hide. Throughout the course of the past nine years, it has been noted that over 7.3% of NCAA student athletes have committed suicide due to the insane amount of stress and anxiety that can come from being a collegiate athlete. This is just another reason why it is so important to openly talk about the mental health of student athletes. The NCAA has increased its revenue to over one billion dollars in 2021, and it seems

that the money is all they care about. They continue to ignore the voices of student athletes asking for help, whether it is more resources for emotional and physical support, or having stricter rules so coaches can't run our bodies down by over practicing year round. There is a lot more the organization can be doing as a whole, but the health of their student athletes just isn't a priority for the NCAA.

This picture represents some of the feelings that go through a student athlete's head whether it's on the court or in the classroom. The stress and anxiety comes from having a lot on your plate and being extremely overwhelmed. The phobia and shame comes from the worries of not being good enough on the court, and from being scared of not performing to the best of your ability. Depression and panic can come from all of these things as well as not having enough time to do things you actually enjoy and make you truly happy.



This picture represents the heartbreak that the sport you play can cause. After the countless hours of hard work, it is devastating when things don't work out the way you dreamed of. Whether it is a tough loss, you don't get to play in an important game, or maybe getting injured during a crucial part of the season. There are a lot of emotions that can occur, and crying is not uncommon. In addition to this, the pressure from the coaches and fans can add to the emotional stress. It can be very difficult playing under so much pressure.



This picture represents the feeling of being so busy and overwhelmed that it feels like you are drowning. From having lift, practice, class, tutoring, homework, team meetings, treatment, watching film and team bonding, it is extremely difficult to stay afloat and not feel overburdened. This feeling is very common, and it is usually difficult for coaches and staff to understand how we feel.



For this picture, I asked a variety of student athletes from all different sports and different universities to give me a quote of the worst thing their coach has ever said to them. This picture depicts all of the terrible things that have been told to young people by their coaches. Coaches are supposed to be motivating and uplifting to their players, not tell them horrible things to bring them down and make their lives miserable. It was terrible to hear all of these quotes.

You're playing like middle

schoolers

You guys look like a middle school

team Do you think crying is going to help anything?

you look extremely rough

Mlk called he wants his nose back

You look like a divorced whore

fuck you

stop eating you will get fat

save your tears for the pillow

I wish I was dead so I didn't have to watch

this team

Start running and lose the muffin top or keep

sitting the bench

you will probably fuck it up again, so i

don't care

you make me wish i never moved from you're disposable

Brazil you're not good

stop asking questions

i could shoot you

isn't it fun to watch them suffer

You should just quit ~~you~~ ever keep ur mouth shut

You should get the flu more often if it will make

you this skinny

you're worthless transfer to a different school

worthless

you need to lose weight so you can jump

higher

My Coach Said...

In my 20 something years of coaching

I've never met any player I couldn't

understand. Until I met you.

pull your shit together

you need a bigger punishment

I hate you you're not hurt, stop overreacting

you'll never go d1

you'd be lucky to make it d2 or

d3

you'll never see the court if you make that

mistake again

stop playing like fucking pussys

you will never be better than her

we don't want you here you lost the game for us once again

you're fine, don't be

hey

dramatic

terrorist your biggest goal in life should be to marry rich

n-word you're wasting everyone's

time

you're using mental

health to victimize

yourself, deal with it

My Coach Said...

This picture represents the extreme stress and breakdowns that so many student athletes experience, sometimes even on a daily basis. Sometimes you feel so many emotions at once, that you just want to scream and cry. It is not easy to keep your emotions inside when you are feeling so many different things, and this picture is a perfect depiction of that.

