

Athletics, an All-Around Improvement

For all of my life, I have focused on school, and how I can strive to make myself a better person. Athletics was and is an escape for me from the stress that high school brings. For some people, hanging out with friends or playing video games will suffice for enough distraction. I have never been, and probably never will be, the most social of people. In other words, it just isn't in my personality to use socialization as an escape. I have also never been truly captured by the video game lifestyle, it didn't seem to fit my style, so I needed to find another way to alleviate the stresses of everyday life. I chose athletics.

Athletics truly have a unique atmosphere; they involve both exercise and socialization, two proven techniques of stress release. Coupled onto that, exercise fortifies the body in numerous ways, strengthening the heart, muscles, and brain. A favorite shoe brand of mine, ASICS, gets its name from a Latin saying, *anima sana in corporo sano*. Translated, this means, "a sound mind in a sound body," a motto that I often repeat to myself reminding me why I am in athletics. It is what urges me to be both the academic, and the athlete.

The social atmosphere of athletics is also quite astounding. One man alone can do nothing against adversity, but when he is a part of a team, walls that were at one time there, are utterly destroyed, opening up the world to him and his peers. Not only do the members of an athletic team become friends, they become family. Everyone cares for one another and when one member is loved, all are loved, when one is hurt, they all hurt. It is in this aspect that I love being a part of a team, especially my team. We are one, a unified group that is inseparable.

Athletics has also taught me more than schooling ever could. The life values, discipline, and commitment from being part of a team may influence the path one takes after high school far more than what is learned in the classroom. As a member of my high school's football team, I can say that there is nothing more important than hard work to being the best that one can be. Day in and day out, the coaches would rattle us about getting in the weight room, or running just a little faster during conditioning. And in the end, we didn't win state, we didn't even have a winning season, but we had learned more about ourselves and about life lessons than the rest of our state combined. In twenty years, no one is going to care who won the state title in 2012, but they will care about diligence, work ethic, and personal values. This is what high school athletics has taught me, more important than anything learned in school.

There is nothing better than knowing that improvement has occurred. As I had stressed earlier, I live my life trying to always better myself. One way athletics has helped me in that aspect is that it provides a quantitative analysis of my advancement. Being a track and field athlete, each week, I can see whether or not I have improved. Hearing the distance of my javelin throw, I am filled with the joy of my enhancement. If my throw is not a personal best, disappointment fills my body. However, this disappointment fuels my drive to improve even further, and eventually, when the season is over, I become awestruck at the overall success that I have accomplished. This trait has transferred over to the rest of my life and it is what pushes me to be the best I can be. Athletics pushes me to be the best I can be.