**Documentation Style**

**Name -**

**Title -**

**Background Information -**

**Why We Chose to Interview this Person -**

**Information Gathered (Questions Asked and Their Response) -**

**Chiara**

**Kristin Yep**

**MTU tennis coach**

**Has coached the men’s and women’s tennis teams at Michigan Tech for 3+ seasons. Acquired prior head coaching experience at a college in California. Also used to compete on the International Tennis Federation level during her career as a tennis player.**

**I chose to interview this person because she has a lot of experience in being an athlete as well as helping people compete on a high level. She also has a mental health certification and therefore I thought she might be able to share good insights on stress management.**

1. **Which mental wellness challenges do you see for athletes?**

**In my eyes, the biggest challenge for athletes especially if they are not just doing their sport for fun is performance anxiety. When you practice a lot you and your environment start to have certain expectations and oftentimes it isn’t easy to meet them.**

1. **Which resources do you recommend for athletes if they are struggling mentally?**

**I recommend they seek therapy and speak to a specialist who can give counseling that targets the individual's situation. I also recommend that the person learns stress management techniques which it can then use to deal with stressful situations.**

1. **Which particular methods do you recommend to athletes to keep good mental health and to manage their stress effectively?**

**I for instance recommend therapy, meditation, yoga, and breathwork. They can be very effective in dealing with stress triggers and also as preventive tools. I also recommend athletes to spend some time outside of sport. When you are on the sports team and do a lot of sports it happens that you live in your bubble and are only surrounded by people that see you as an athlete and expect you to perform. It can be useful to spend time with people who don’t see you as an athlete and to engage in activities that have nothing to do with your sport. This can free your mind.**

1. **Which techniques do you recommend in particular to practice stress management on a game day?**

**I recommend breathwork, and stretching exercises as supporting and talking to your teammates.**

1. **How do you think an app or technology could help help athletes with stress management?**

**I think it can be a way that make stress management easily accessible by using your phone. Most people are on their phones a lot every day so this is a good way to remind people to manage their stress and even track the stress that athletes experience.**

1. **What features do you think such an app should have?**

**It needs to have a feature that enables athletes to easily find resources. I also imagine it to have short learning videos that teach the user how to properly stretch, and do breathwork. It might also be nice to have a built-in store where customers can purchase products that help them relax like for instance oils etc. I think the most important feature of the app should be that it is easy to use and understand.**

**Marina Fernandez Gutierrez**

**Tennis player of the MTU women’s team**

**Is a senior on the team who has played a lot of seasons at Michigan Tech and therefore has a lot of experience on how to manage stress effectively on game days as well as seeing how teammates manage stress and what their day-to-day struggles are.**

1. **Which mental wellness challenges do you see for athletes?**

**I see a variety of different challenges for athletes. I also believe that the challenges vary from the level a person competes at. However, I see one big challenge in the need to manage your time. As an athlete, it feels like you never have enough time. Especially being a student-athlete you have to juggle well between doing good in school and managing practices. I imagine it to be equally challenging as a pro because you will have to deal with a lot of PR appointments and events that you might have to go to. Some people develop anxiety because they feel like they have too many things on their plate at the same time or are worried that they won’t perform well enough. Another challenge could be that you are oftentimes far away from home and this is something you have to get used to. Besides all of those factors, you have to be mentally tough on game day to win. This can be another challenge.**

1. **Which resources do you recommend for athletes if they are struggling mentally?**

**I recommend connecting with your family and friends or other people that you trust and expressing your feelings to them. I also think it can be very helpful to talk to your coach and ask for advice on how to deal with challenges and adversity. Besides that, it can be useful to speak to a professional like for instance a psychologist or counselor. At MTU I would recommend talking to Sarah Dow since she is a specialist on that topic and helps a lot of athletes.**

1. **Which particular methods do you recommend to athletes to keep good mental health and to manage their stress effectively?**

**I recommend them to plan out their week and days in advance. Having a plan that I can follow and knowing what will be expected of me in the following days helps me to be less stressed. It helps me to break things down and focus on one thing at a time instead of getting overwhelmed no matter if it is an athletic responsibility or something for school or with people. I think To-do lists help a lot to keep your stress level as low as possible. Also, try to surround yourself with good and positive people that will boost your mood and make you feel less stressed. It can also help to work with positive affirmations.**

1. **Which techniques do you recommend in particular to practice stress management on a game day?**

**I recommend socializing with your teammates. Everybody is in the same situation so it can be useful to just talk with each other and be open about how you feel and if you are nervous or anxious. Use your teammates' support and also be supportive. Also, build a mental routine. This should be a go-to strategy that you can use on game day if you feel stressed. I can also help with focusing and enhance your concentration. I also recommend you develop some kind of ritual to get energized. This can for instance be listening to music.**

1. **How do you think an app or technology could help help athletes with stress management?**

**It can help in reminding people to practice stress management. Especially young people are on their phones almost 24/7 so an app could be a useful and accessible stress management tool.**

1. **What features do you think such an app should have?**

**I think it needs to be a good app that works well and also has a nice design, somewhat like a social media platform. It needs to be easy to use and intuitive. It should have a to-do list and tracking tool so that people can plan and also see what they achieved in the past. It would be cool if it had a tool where you could build your routine and then check part for part.**

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***Blake***

**Logan Pietila**

**Hockey player for MTU**

**Senior hockey player on MTU has lived away from home to play hockey, and been through many practices, workouts, ups and downs of a season, and has a lot of experience through these events that can affect an athlete's stress. Lived with different (Host) families while traveling for hockey and has been in many different environments.**

1. **What mental wellness challenges do you think athletes commonly face in your sport or sports in general?**

**One thing that I notice the most is the daily pressure to perform for your team as well as in the classroom. If your grades are not high enough you cannot participate with the team and if you are not performing on the ice the coaching staff will not play you. The pressure to succeed on the ice and in the classroom can take a toll on your mental health. The stigma around mental health in sports is also a challenge that athletes can face, and makes seeking help a challenge.**

1. **Which resources do you recommend for athletes if they are struggling mentally?**

**I recommend going to someone you can trust like family, parents, or a mental health professional. I also recommend using techniques such as pre-game exercises if stressed out or anxious about a game.**

1. **What methods do you recommend to athletes to keep good mental health and manage their stress effectively?**

**One thing that I recommend to manage stress and always feel their best is to get the right amount of sleep. As a student-athlete, it can be hard to get to bed on time, especially with an overload of assignments, but finishing assignments in advance and having a consistent regular sleep schedule goes a long way. Another recommendation that works for me is to take a cold shower every morning, this makes me feel my best and be ready for the day.**

1. **Which techniques do you recommend in particular to practice stress management on a game day?**

**One thing to keep my mind free of stress is to lie down and take a nap before the game. This allows me to not think about the game for a while. Another technique I have been doing is a game day routine. Familiarizing myself with a routine calms me down and makes me feel as ready as I can be for the game. One technique I have been using is visualization. I visualize part of the game in my head where I am having individual and team success to build confidence and reduce anxiety.**

1. **How do you think an app or technology could help help athletes with stress management?**

**I think that it can help athletes who don’t necessarily know how to seek help or are afraid to seek help from others. It can be an easy quick access tool for athletes to improve performance and mental health.**

1. **What features do you think such an app should have?**

**One that comes to mind is being able to chat with a mental health professional or something that provides ideas on what to do based on what you are feeling. If I'm stressed about a game, what can I do to help or take my mind off it?**

**Chase Pietila**

**Hockey player for MTU**

**Freshmen hockey player on MTU who is new to college and experiencing being a student-athlete at the collegiate level for the first time. A freshman can have different mental health experiences than someone who has been around longer than Logan has been.**

1. **What mental wellness challenges do you think athletes commonly face in your sport or sports in general?**

**A common thing I see among others with being a freshman is that it can be hard to adjust to maybe not playing as much because you are younger and may have upperclassmen on the roster in your position taking playing time from others. I notice that maybe more depression can be present or the feeling of being down on yourself because of others playing instead of you. Handling a situation like this can be tough for athletes, especially moving away from home to a new city or state and you feel like you're doing everything you can but it isn’t good enough.**

1. **Which resources do you recommend for athletes if they are struggling mentally?**

**I would recommend talking to older teammates and asking them for any tips on what they did to get through tough situations. I would access teammates in the same class as me as well because they are going through very similar situations, being first-year collegiate athletes and the adjustments are very similar.**

1. **What methods do you recommend to athletes to keep good mental health and manage their stress effectively?**

**I would recommend setting realistic goals that you can achieve throughout the season. Short-term and long-term goals can help provide a sense of purpose and motivation when things may be difficult or out of your control.**

1. **Which techniques do you recommend in particular to practice stress management on a game day?**

**I recommend listening to music. This makes me feel in the zone and ready to perform. It also calms me down and relaxes my mind which allows me to not think too much about the game and any stresses or anxiety that can come from it.**

1. **How do you think an app or technology could help help athletes with stress management?**

**An app could be helpful by providing athletes with basic information that they may not have been exposed to before. It can be really easy to access and help more athletes learn about mental health.**

1. **What features do you think such an app should have?**

**It can provide relaxation exercises for athletes to perform on game days or throughout the week leading up to performances. Maybe have a tool that allows athletes to write down thoughts, similar to a journal to track their information.**

**Bhavani Chalamalla**

**Elisa Jurmu**

**MTU Women’s Basketball Assistant Head Coach**

**Elisa Jurmu was promoted to Assistant Head Coach for the 2022-23 season after serving four years as Assistant Coach. Jurmu spent four seasons with the Huskies as a player where she appeared in 57 games. She helped guide Tech to a 90-25 record during that span, which included three Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Division Championships and two appearances in the NCAA Division II National Tournament.**

**Last season, the Huskies amassed a 25-7 overall record (15-3 GLIAC) and finished runner-up in the GLIAC Tournament. The Huskies qualified for the NCAA Midwest Region Tournament and fell in the quarterfinals to Trevecca Nazarene.**

**Information gathered:**

**1) From your perspective, how do sports-related injuries affect athletes not only physically, but also mentally and emotionally?**

Yeah, so obviously when they have an injury physically, they're not able to practice or participate how they want to. It can cause a lot of frustration on their side of things. Also with their mental health, a lot of times they will suffer as a result of an injury because of the same reason when they're not able to perform how they want and they're not able to compete at the level they want. The frustration usually turns into more of, I guess it can cause depression at times, but it affects that as well as their physical health

**2) Sure. What strategies or guidance do you provide to athletes to help them manage stress, anxiety, or emotional challenges during their injury recovery?**

Yeah. We talk to them every day and check in, to see how they're doing, and to see what resources we can provide them. A lot of times those resources are our athletic trainers as far as the physical side of things. Then we have a sports-specific counselor in the athletic department. We can set up meetings with her, and she's more on the mental health side of things. She'll either meet with them or if she's not a good fit for them, she can set them up with someone else on or off campus. Then with our team specifically, we send out a wellness questionnaire three days a week. Every morning, which is Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, I text it to them and they fill it out. That just checks how they're feeling physically if they have a lot of stress with school, and then it asks how they're doing mentally. If any of the numbers are off or lower than we want, then we check in and see what they need from us.

**3) How do you think a mental wellness app could complement or enhance the support you offer to injured athletes as a coach?**

Yeah, I think that could be helpful. I don't know exactly what the app would look like, but I think just another resource for them. Every student prefers a different type of treatment, whether it's physical or mental. I think that could be very beneficial for them to have another resource that they can tap into when they're going through a really hard time, such as an injury or something like that.

**4) What role does a positive mindset play in the recovery and performance of athletes, and how can it be nurtured and developed?**Yeah, I think that's important. I think if they know or they have a positive mindset on if they'll be back and when they'll be back, it helps them attack their rehab a little bit better, and they are more confident in what they're doing, which helps. What was the second question? How can these be addressed through a...

**5) And how can these be addressed and how can they be nurtured and developed?** Yeah, so I think like you said, like an app or just meeting with coaches, talking to a counselor maybe, and a lot of it is support from teammates and coaches. That's how most of our players feel the best when they're around the team. Then they feel better and then they're more positive in general, which helps their injury recovery and all of that.

**6) In your experience, what are the key factors that contribute to successful injury recovery?**

I think having a really strong support system is probably one of the biggest things. They need to have a good rehab plan, and that comes from our athletic trainer or the physical therapist. But I think just having a good support system around them for when things aren't going as well as they want, or they're having a negative day, or the rehab isn't working as quickly as they want, but just having people around them who are going to uplift them and make them feel like they're going to come back and support them, even if maybe it's not going how they want it to be.

**7) Do you think these injury recoveries can be addressed through a digital platform?** I think it can be. I think that would be more of a supplement to what they have to do physically. I think having the app would be beneficial as something they can do after their physical rehab or physical therapy and things like that. But I think it's a really good supplement to what we already have for our athletes because I think as far as all of that go, is physical and mental health, the more resources they can have, the better equipped they are and the better things will go for them when something does happen.

**8) How do you see the relationship between mental wellness and physical recovery in athletes? And what can be done to better support athletes in both areas?** Yeah, I think there is a really strong correlation. I think, again, like I said, if you're struggling mentally, then sometimes that will lead to physical injuries just because of maybe lack of sleep or you're not eating as much, or just the overall fatigue from the mental fatigue. Then physical injuries, like we talked about earlier, a lot of times lead to mental health challenges just by not being able to compete or participate. I think overall, we probably need more resources for mental health services. I know we're up in a small town with not a lot of resources, but I think if we could just get more counselors, more therapists, things like that, and it's easier access because I know we've had athletes try to reach out about appointments and it's a month or two wait to get in. I think just yeah, quicker access, and I think that's how an app or virtual meetings and therapy and things like that can be beneficial because the wait time is a lot less and easier access.

**9) In your experience, what are the common misconceptions or myths that athletes have about injury recovery? And how can an app help educate them on these topics?** Yeah, I think some of the misconceptions, depending on the injury, are just like they have a timeline in their head of when they want to come back. And a lot of times it does not match up with what happens. Usually, they want to get back quicker than they're able to, depending on what the injury is. But I think an app can help educate them. Maybe it's just talking to other athletes who have been through the same thing, or maybe it's education about their specific injury what the recovery looks like, and what all the healing has to look like for them to be healthy. I think the app could help educate them with all of that. They understand why they shouldn't come back earlier or what the risks are of that.

**10) How do you currently monitor the mental well-being of your athletes during the injury recovery? And how can technology assist in this process?**  
 Yeah, so like I said, we check in with them every day, whether it's just when they're studying or doing homework or at practice, we just see how they're doing. If we notice any differences in their behavior, if they seem quieter or more withdrawn, we check-in, and then we send them the wellness questionnaire, and that's just on Google Sheets. But I think an app could be a really good tool. Maybe it sends them a reminder every morning to fill it out, and then we can monitor how they're doing. Or if they have any concerns about a teammate, they could message us on there, things like that. But I think it could be really useful just as far as tracking it and then communication between athletes and coaches or athletic trainers or things like that.

**11) Can you share any specific scenarios or cases where addressing the mental aspects of injury recovery made a significant difference in an athlete's program? Progress?** Yeah. I think we've had a lot of girls with injuries that were serious, maybe an ACL with their knee or something like that. What we've done with that is a lot of times they have gone to our counselor and the athletic department sets up an injured student-athlete group. It's just them supporting each other and talking through things since they're going through something similar.  
 But I think the most beneficial thing for a lot of our girls who get injured is just being around the team and having them to support them and hopefully make them feel like they can still be beneficial to the team even if they are injured and they can't play. They've been able to still be involved in practice and all of that. Then also, as I said, we'll set them up with counselors or mental health providers if we're able to and whatever they're most comfortable with.

**12) What recommendations do you have for creating a supportive and engaging user experience in mental wellness apps for athletes?**

I think the most beneficial thing would probably be just obviously having access to it on their own time when they're free. I think honestly, one of the biggest things would just be having the support of others, whether they can connect with other athletes or connect with mental health services. But I think that's one of the biggest things is just accessibility to all of that. I think education there could also be very useful. Maybe it's just a mindfulness activity where they can work on their breathing and try to have a positive mindset or meditation, things like that, where they can still get some benefit from it, but it's not too exerting for them. But yeah, just really, I think, being able to connect with others who have been in their situation or someone who could support them when they feel like they are struggling.

**Maxwell James**

***Kaycee Meiners***

**MTU Women’s Volleyball Captain**

Kaycee is a 4th-year volleyball player who was elected captain of her team this year by her fellow teammates. She provides an inside perspective on the stress of varsity sports and the tools she uses to overcome it.

Question - How do you balance your mental wellness with the stress of varsity athletics?

Kaycee went into detail on how the most important thing to her is the people that are around her. Teammates, trainers, and coaches all play an extremely important role in Kaycee‘s mental wellness. She emphasized that without them it would not be possible.

Question - What are mental wellness challenges that may be unique to athletes?

There are the normal things that students deal with: exams, homework, and such. Athletes also have to balance that with periods of high-intensity training or games. They have to do everything a normal student does and they have to perform at the highest level possible in sports. That can be challenging and stressful.

Question - How do you deal with these athlete-specific problems?

Take it one step at a time. Focus specifically on one problem and then find the solution.

Question - What tools do you have at your disposal for mental wellness?

The biggest one is the counselor for mental wellness that the athletes have at their disposal. Going to her is always a good option. Other than that, relying on teammates and coaches to help is her goal. Her teammates are the most important factor and they help her keep a level head.

Other general information -

There is always a lot of pressure to perform. You cannot have a bad day when the team needs you to have a good day. By relying on teammates and others to help carry the weight of that with them it becomes a doable task. The stress of everyday life can be difficult for athletes, but by taking it one step at a time it is possible to handle it.

***Makena Wesol***

**MTU Volleyball Player**

Makena is a second-year volleyball player here at MTU. She suffered a season-ending injury in the final points of our home opener this year against Winona State. This makes Makena a perfect person to talk to about injury recovery. She tore her Achilles and since has gotten surgery and begun the recovery process. We had a conversation and this summarizes what was learned.

When talking to Makena we mainly discussed how the injury affected her mentally. She had never gone through an injury of this caliber and she opened up about how it made her feel. There seemed to be a path of emotions that hit her. At first, she was upset at herself and angry that she would be missing the rest of the season. Once she realized that there was nothing she could have done she transitioned her energy into the future. She thought about what would need to happen to heal as quickly as possible. She talked to me about how important it is to have a support system around you when recovering from an injury. This included trainers, friends, and most importantly her family. She also talked about the injured student-athlete group that meets every so often. She uses this to talk to other athletes who are going through a similar process. Since the injury, I have seen Makena take more of a coaching role and help her teammates grow. Overall, she clarified that it is important to stay positive and do whatever you can to help recover from injury.

***Lindy Oujiri***

**MTU Volleyball Player**

Lindy is a graduating senior volleyball player here at MTU. She has had ups and downs throughout her career and she was willing to open up about

After talking to Lindy mainly about her final season and injuries she experienced I believed that there was no new information to be gained that Makena didn’t provide. However I think that Lindy did provide me with some good information when it comes to competition. Lindy utilized an app known as Student Support (previously known as My SSP) to help her deal with the mental stress of sports. I think that this would be an important app to look at for ideas and get a better understanding of the competition.

**Haranadh Reddy Ravi**

**Jeffery Price**

**MTU men’s Football Player**

**Appeared in 10 games for the Huskies... Recorded 28.0 tackles, including 14 solo tackles.**

**1. Can you share your personal experience of dealing with sports-related injury?**

Yes, I had surgery on my shoulder in February of 2023 so about 8 months ago I had a latter-day procedure which is because I tore my labor bone I dislocated my shoulder about 14 times last football season and I had to get major surgery on it it took about 6 and a 1/2 to 7 and 1/2 months for my full recovery and even to this day it's not perfect but yeah that was one.

**2. How did the injury affect you physically and mentally?**

Emotionally and mentally, the beginning of my recovery from surgery was extremely challenging. It was difficult to envision myself regaining full strength and reaching my desired physical state. On a mental level, it was tough as well. The post-surgery period involved a lot of pain, despite the medication provided. This experience is a shared struggle for those currently undergoing it, those who have been through it, and those who will face it in the future. Navigating through these challenges required addressing specific anxieties and managing stress factors. I grappled with worries about my future and whether I could fully recover and return to my previous physical condition.

**3. What strategies or coping mechanisms did you use to manage the stress and emotional impact of your injury and recovery process?**

I've discussed my experiences with many people, and my counselor emphasized the importance of having a plan, especially when dealing with injury-related situations or managing day-to-day life. Following her advice, I adhered to the plan provided, incorporating my adjustments, additions, and omissions. This approach helped me stay on track and prevented excessive stress during the entire recovery process.

4. **How important is mental wellness, including stress management, in your overall recovery journey? How do you believe it impacts your performance and well-being as an athlete?**

Maintaining focus and resilience is crucial during challenging times, especially when facing setbacks in your recovery. It's important not to let discouraging feedback or obstacles overwhelm you. Stay committed to your plan, even when confronted with difficulties. Staying positive, focused, and dedicated can make a significant difference in overcoming obstacles and achieving your goals.

**5. Are there specific tools or resources that you found particularly helpful in addressing the mental aspects of injury recovery?**

I think having somebody to talk to is a valuable resource. There's an injured athlete group that was introduced last semester, and it's still ongoing this semester. Having somebody to talk to who is also going through an injury is very beneficial because they understand, or at least can empathize with, what you're experiencing. They comprehend your point of view, and connecting with someone who shares similar experiences is always very helpful.

**6.** **What features or tools would you find most valuable in an app designed to support athletes in injury recovery, both physically and mentally?**

Perhaps having a section or feature in the app where individuals can input their recovery plans would be beneficial. Additionally, incorporating interactive features such as the ability to contact others, form groups, and check in on each other could enhance the user experience. This way, everyone can support one another and share their progress, fostering a sense of community and ensuring that nobody feels isolated in their journey.

**7. In your experience, how have coaches or healthcare professionals supported you in managing the mental challenges of injury recovery?**

My experience has been pretty good. I've been involved in sports for over half of my life, and even from a young age, coaches have been tough on me, but they always try to offer support in various aspects of life—be it school, relationships, or anything outside of the sport itself. I believe coaches and healthcare professionals play a crucial role in the mental aspect of the recovery process.

**8. What role does goal setting play in your recovery journey, and how do you stay motivated to achieve those goals despite the challenges?**

Goal setting is integral to my recovery journey, providing a roadmap and milestones for progress. Breaking down larger goals into manageable tasks helps me stay focused. Visualizing success and maintaining a positive mindset reinforces my motivation. A supportive community and adaptability in adjusting goals contribute to sustained determination despite challenges.

**9. What role do social support and peer interaction play in your mental wellness during recovery, and how can an app facilitate or enhance this support network?**

I believe, incorporating a mobile app could be beneficial since everyone uses their phones nowadays, making information more accessible. This could particularly aid athletes in tracking their recovery. However, in contrast to the mentality in sports where pushing oneself is encouraged, especially for athletes, in physical recovery like therapy, adherence to a prescribed program is often emphasized. It's crucial to stick to the recommended program as it is designed to facilitate recovery without pushing too hard, unlike the mentality in athletic training where pushing limits is encouraged for improvement.

**10. How do you see the relationship between mental wellness and physical recovery networks and what can be done to better support athletes in both areas?**

The relationship between physical well-being and mental health is significant. When an athlete is physically sore or in pain from practices or games, it can impact their mood and mental state. The tension in the body often translates to mental tension, making it challenging for the individual to be in a positive or sociable mood. In essence, physical discomfort can have a direct effect on mental well-being, highlighting the interconnectedness of physical and mental health in the athlete's experience.

**11. In your experience what are the key factors that contribute to successful injury recovery?**

Key factors in navigating challenges include having a strong support system, having someone to talk to, maintaining focus, and staying motivated. Having a support system provides emotional reinforcement while having someone to talk to offers a valuable outlet for expressing feelings. Staying focused and motivated involves regularly reminding oneself of the ultimate goals and the reasons behind the journey, serving as a source of inspiration and determination.

**Haranadh Reddy Ravi**

Reed Napiwocki

**MTU men’s Football Player**

Led the team in tackles and tackles for loss... Two interceptions, two forced fumbles... As a senior, three forced fumbles... Second team all-conference cornerback... second team all-conference safety... First team all-conference as a senior... Helped team to conference championship.

**1. Can you describe a specific instance when you faced a significant injury and had to undergo recovery? What were the most challenging aspects of the recovery process for you?**

While I fortunately avoided major injuries, a close friend and teammate, Alex, faced a challenging recovery from a severe knee injury during our junior year at Michigan Tech. Witnessing his struggle and resilience was deeply impactful. The mental toll of being away from the game and the arduous rehabilitation process tested his fortitude. Yet, with unwavering support from our team, coaches, and medical staff, Alex overcame the setback, showcasing the power of determination and the strength of our football family. His successful return to the field stands as a testament to the bonds forged in the face of adversity.

**2. How did Alex manage and keep track of his injury recovery plan? Are there any tools or methods he found particularly helpful?**

My close friend Alex, recovering from a knee injury, relies on a detailed physical therapy journal and uses injury tracking apps for progress. Wearable fitness trackers aid in monitoring overall activity levels. Regular consultations with healthcare professionals ensure adjustments to the recovery plan.

**3. In terms of emotional support during recovery, who or what has been the most beneficial for him? Friends, family, teammates, or another source?**

Alex found support from his friends, family, and teammates during recovery. They encouraged him a lot and helped him stay positive. The football team, in particular, was like a family and made a big difference in dealing with the tough times of healing.

**4. Regarding goal setting, how do you establish and track your recovery goals? Are there specific milestones or achievements that motivate you throughout the process?**

From my Perspective Setting recovery goals involves establishing clear milestones and tracking progress diligently. I work closely with my medical team to define specific, measurable objectives. Whether it's regaining a certain range of motion or achieving strength benchmarks, having tangible goals keeps me motivated. Celebrating small victories along the way, like completing a challenging exercise, encourages and reinforces the sense of achievement. The constant collaboration with healthcare professionals ensures that goals are realistic yet challenging, contributing to a focused and effective recovery plan.

**5. How important is communication with healthcare professionals and coaches from your Perspective in the recovery journey? What type of information do you find most crucial to share with them?**

Communication with healthcare professionals and coaches is paramount in my recovery journey. Sharing detailed information about my progress, any pain or discomfort experienced, and adherence to the prescribed exercises is crucial. This open line of communication ensures that adjustments to the recovery plan can be made promptly, and it allows for a collaborative approach to tailor the rehabilitation process to my specific needs. Regular updates also provide insights that help healthcare professionals and coaches make informed decisions about the next steps in the recovery journey.

**6. Are there any specific challenges or concerns you're Friend encountered during his recovery that you believe could be addressed or alleviated through a mobile app or digital tool?**

My friend Alex faced challenges during recovery, particularly in staying connected with his rehabilitation plan and managing the emotional aspects. A mobile app could address this by providing daily exercise reminders, progress tracking, and a platform for virtual support from healthcare professionals and fellow athletes. Additionally, integrating features to monitor and address mental well-being could alleviate the emotional strain, offering resources like motivational content or forums for sharing experiences. Such a digital tool could enhance the overall recovery experience by providing personalized support and fostering a sense of community.

**7. In terms of community support, does Alex currently connect with other athletes going through similar recovery experiences? How do you think a platform for athlete interaction and support could enhance his recovery journey?**

Currently, Alex connects with other athletes facing similar recovery experiences, finding solace in shared struggles and victories. A dedicated platform for athlete interaction and support could further enhance his recovery journey by fostering a supportive community. This digital space could facilitate the exchange of insights, advice, and encouragement, creating a sense of camaraderie among individuals navigating similar challenges. Real-time communication and shared milestones on such a platform could not only motivate Alex but also provide valuable perspectives from those who have successfully overcome similar hurdles. This interconnected support system would likely contribute significantly to the emotional and mental aspects of his recovery.

**Bhavani Chalamalla**

**Katelyn Meister**

**In the 2021-22 college basketball season, Kate excelled as a key player for the Huskies, earning a spot on the GLIAC Academic Excellence Team. Starting in 29 games, she showcased versatility by averaging 10.1 points and 4.9 rebounds per game, ranking fourth and third on the team, respectively. Notable highlights included a season-high 20 points against Northern Michigan and a strong performance with nine rebounds in the GLIAC Quarterfinals against Northwood. The previous season, she started 18 games and maintained a balanced contribution of 5 points and 5 rebounds per game. Her high school achievements were equally impressive, boasting averages of 22 points, eight rebounds, and five assists per game, earning multiple All-Conference and All-State honors, and being a key player in their team's success with four conference championships and a perfect 40-0 record. In addition to her athletic prowess, she was part of the National Honor Society, reflecting academic excellence.**

**1) Can you share your personal experience of dealing with sports-related injury? What are the most significant challenges you face during your recovery journey?**

Yeah, so one of the most prominent injuries that I've had as an athlete, I've been very fortunate. I haven't had many really long-lasting injuries, but in my freshman year, I had a really bad ankle injury. So when it happened at practice, the first thing that I did was immediately go back to the training room with my trainer and what he did was he did an initial evaluation and then he sent me to UP Sports Health Medicine just to get an x-ray. I guess, a doctor's eyes look at it too.

I was out for probably two to three weeks and I missed a couple of games. So that was a challenge for me. I have never been in a position where I wasn't able to compete or where, I guess, I wasn't practicing or playing. It was just a very different perspective for me, not being on the floor with all my friends and I guess just trying to stay engaged on the sideline to better myself when it wasn't a physical rep. Learning how to do that was definitely a challenge, but I think that definitely helped me overall in my athletic career because there are times when either you're not getting a rep or you're getting rest. So I think that definitely seeing it from a different perspective helped me. But probably the biggest challenges were sitting out and not being active and physically engaged with my teammates and missing games was really hard too.

**2) How did the injury affect you not only physically but also mentally and emotionally?**

I think I was very frustrated with my injury. I did a lot of treatment and I was always in for recovery it was very difficult for me to put in hours trying to get better and then not physically getting better was really hard. I was very impatient with it. I did. I wanted to be back right away and it was really difficult I guess when you're putting in that work to get better but I guess not seeing those results right away was really difficult and really draining for me. Yeah, mentally and emotionally is really hard.

**3) Were there any specific stressors or anxieties you encountered during this time?**

Well, freshman year I felt like I was dealing with a lot to begin with so I guess having that injury and like additive treatment on top of an already busy schedule. The stresses of school and just adjusting to being away from home that was also really difficult for me so those were definitely additive stressors then coming back from my injury too I think I was really I was more anxious than I was before, after being out for a couple of weeks. I was really anxious that I wouldn't be in as good of shape as I was, that I wouldn't move as well as I did before because my ankle was hurting me. I'd say those were probably the biggest stressors and anxiety-inducing factors.

**4) What strategies or coping mechanisms did you use to manage the stress and emotional impact of your injury and recovery process?**

I talked about it before seeing it from a different perspective. I talked a lot with my coach, which really helped me. She basically just said, you just need to do what you can and listen to your body so that you do get better and this isn't a long-lasting injury that's going to bother you for years to come. I think that definitely seeing it from the perspective that even though I'm not physically competing I can still be engaged mentally. I can still do little things at practice, whether it's working the shot clock or whether it was knowing my scout really well and just being really engaged on the sideline. I think that helped me be engaged because that was the part that I was really missing the most.

**5) How important is mental wellness, including stress management in your overall injury recovery?**

Very important. I feel like it's an already really difficult thing to be going through, to not only be feeling that pain but feeling somewhat isolated and excluded. That's really difficult. So I think that after going through that as a teammate, if I have other teammates that are going through injuries, I do try really hard to make it known that they're engaged, they're still part of the team even though they're not physically competing.

**6) Are there any specific tools or resources that you found particularly helpful in addressing the mental aspects of your injury recovery?**

Definitely just like having a trusted adult to talk to that definitely helped me. I guess from my perspective I had never been through anything like that before so hearing from somebody else about their experiences and about their outlook on the situation really helped me. I feel like sometimes when you're in the heat of the moment it can be really easy to be super frustrated and I mean super sad with the whole situation but I guess like hearing other people's perspectives and sometimes like the way that other people go through their recovery or like what they learn through their recovery can definitely be really useful for you if you're going through an injury or a similar situation.

**7) In your experience how have coaches or healthcare professionals supported you in managing the mental challenges of your injury recovery?**

Yeah, I kind of talked about it a little bit before but I guess those conversations like with my coaches really helped me I was already struggling freshman year just with being in a new environment and having a million new added stressors and having such a busy schedule so I think just having trusted adults like my coaches or like my trainers to talk to about that really helped me and just like knowing that they were there for me too and that they have my back throughout the whole situation that I wasn't alone that was really helpful. I feel like our athletic trainers too I mean Eric, our trainer, he did a really good job of just supporting me throughout the whole recovery process and just like reminding me to be patient and telling me that like it'll come with due time and like We're doing all we can. So yeah, I think that I'm very fortunate to have them around me.

**8) Have you encountered any barriers or challenges in accessing mental wellness resources during your recovery?**

Not so much. I feel like those resources were there I guess more so like having people to lean on that really helped me even though I wasn't seeking it from people around me. They could tell I needed it so that was definitely something that I was very blessed with. But, I could also see how other athletic teams if you don't have that immediate support or if the culture is a little bit different where that could definitely be a barrier. But yeah, I think that throughout my injury recovery process, I was lucky enough to learn from other’s experiences and help gain a better perspective, but if I didn't have that, I think I would have been really lost.

**9) How could a mobile app help address these barriers?**

I think having the accessibility at your fingertips would be really great. I feel like it can be difficult sometimes to know where to even start when you're facing mental health issues, so having that as even a starting base with different resources within could be very, very helpful. And being able to access that at any time, that could also be really great. And I guess hearing from other people and what they've learned, even if there was a page where you could click on it and it would say, okay, people have been through similar situations to what I have.

For example, Here's Kate and she hurt her ankle in her freshman year and this is what she learned. This was her perspective that entirely switched. I feel like learning from other people is very helpful in terms of stuff like this and just realizing that you're not alone and having somewhere to start.

**Bhavani Chalamalla**

**Good Dionte**

**Football**

**Posted 12 touchdowns, 10 yards per catch, and 43 tackles (nine solo) as a senior... Five-time scholar athlete and honor roll student... Coach's Award winner... 744 rushing yards... Helped team to city championship, district championship…**

**1) Could you describe the injury you suffered and the circumstances surrounding it?**

I sustained a torn ACL(knee injury) during a match when I landed awkwardly after going up for a header. The circumstances were challenging, as it happened in a crucial game, and the immediate pain was intense.

**2) How did you cope with the immediate challenges and emotions?**

Initially, I was devastated. The realization that I would be sidelined for a significant period was tough to accept. However, I focused on seeking immediate medical attention, and talking to my teammates and family provided emotional support. Accepting the situation and creating a plan for recovery helped ease the initial shock.

**3) Were there moments of doubt or frustration during the recovery, and how did you overcome them?**

Absolutely, there were moments of doubt and frustration, especially when progress seemed slow. Overcoming these feelings involved setting small, achievable goals, celebrating minor victories, and maintaining open communication with my medical team. Trusting the rehabilitation process and being patient were crucial.

**4) What coping strategies did you employ to maintain mental well-being during the challenging times?**

I leaned on a combination of activities. Engaging in low-impact exercises, such as swimming, helped maintain some level of physical activity. Additionally, talking to a sports psychologist allowed me to navigate the mental challenges. Surrounding myself with a positive support system, including teammates and friends, was instrumental in maintaining my mental well-being.

**5) What advice would you give to athletes currently facing injury and recovery?**

I would advise them to accept their emotions and not shy away from seeking help when needed. Create a realistic rehabilitation plan with your medical team, stay connected to your support network, and focus on the aspects of your game that you can improve during the recovery period. Patience and persistence are key.

**6) How can athletes prioritize mental health during the rehabilitation process?**

Mental health should be a deliberate focus during recovery. Setting aside time for relaxation, mindfulness, and engaging in activities that bring joy can help. Establishing a routine that balances physical therapy with mental well-being activities is essential. Don't hesitate to seek professional help if the mental toll becomes overwhelming.

**7) How do you think an app or technology could help athletes with stress management?**

An app or technology designed for stress management could provide personalized meditation or mindfulness exercises tailored to an athlete's schedule. It could also include progress tracking, goal setting, and virtual support groups to create a sense of community among athletes facing similar challenges. Having a tool readily available on a mobile device could make it easier for athletes to integrate stress management into their daily routines.