Madden Shelly Interview On Gymnastics

Madden is a student in Year 10 at BISB. He has devoted much of his life to gymnastics. He has been doing gymnastics since he was six. He does it for 20 hours a week and competes all across the country. We sat down with Madden to understand the role gymnastics plays in his life.

**How has gymnastics affected your life?**

It's a really fun thing to do. It's a really challenging sport, but that makes it worth doing, because it's really rewarding when you get a new skill or when you meet new people across the country. Overall, I think it's made such a big impact on my life with the new friends I have been able to make. Gymnastics has taught me not only about sports but about how to work hard and be disciplined.

**Were there any roadblocks in your gymnastics career?**

Yes, there have been, gymnastics is a very physical sport where you have to physically be able to do many complex and difficult things, which would only come with time.

It is very mentally challenging, because for certain skills, like doing a flip off a high bar that is 10 feet in the air, it is quite scary.

I’ve overcome them now, As i've gained confidence with my skills, by practicing them many times.

**How has gymnastics influenced you academically?**

I think it certainly has changed how I think about school by teaching me the value of working hard. I train a lot, which doesn't leave a lot of time for school work, so I have to be efficient with my homework and studies.

**How did covid affect gymnastics for you?**

As we can only have a small number of people in the gym at once due to COVID-19, it minimizes the available time to practice for competitions. But things are getting better now, as there are less regulations for the amount of people who can be at the gym.

Masks were a big issue as well. Between competitions we were demanded to wear them and this made it difficult to breathe and made it harder to physically and mentally prepare for myself for each round.

**What role did your back injury play in your gymnastics?**

My back injury definitely affected my performance at nationals as I had multiple falls during the competition because of the amount of pain I was in. I tried my hardest and did great in the end which was good.

Coming out of that injury, I had to do personal training and rehab which took a lot of my time and was really tough, especially because I could not train my skills during this time. It felt like my skills were declining while I was in this recovery stage.

**What is your current outlook on gymnastics as a sport?**

I think it's a really cool sport. While it’s a sport that a lot of people know, not a lot of people are aware of the men's side. So, I think that's one sad kind of reality that we're facing now as it's a dying sport especially on the men’s side. This is because a lot of people see the women's side through big figures in the US like Simone Biles and the women's team who have won the Olympics many times. The men are not quite as good as the female team and just there hasn't been as much popularity for them. Additionally, in recent years, colleges have decimated their men's teams. It’s important to be aware of this moving forward.

Madden placed top 25 in the nation in all around gymnastics. Through Madden's gymnastics experience, he emphasized the fact that it most importantly taught him discipline and hard work. There were some roadblocks on the way but he overcame them with time. We thank Madden for sharing his personal insights on gymnastics with this and wish him the best of luck in his future competitions.