

How High School Athletics Has Impacted My Life

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Playing on various sports teams for over thirteen years, I have come to develop a life structured around athletics. As I conclude my senior year of high school, I approach my final debut of competing as a high school athlete. Although this incredible chapter of my life is coming to its end, the lessons I learned, the values I gained, and the character I built will persist on into the next chapter of my life.

High school athletics is the forefront for my best, nostalgic, and heartwarming memories. From breaking my school's 4 x 200 meter relay record for track to losing in the state championship for soccer, the bad and the good alike, these are the memories that I love and the time I will miss. The lessons I learned through these moments are what shaped my life and what drives my ambitions.

The most important lesson I learned through high school athletics is how to overcome adversity. I found that attitude alone can resolve a problem. I learned there is always value in a well-intended effort, no matter the outcome. I learned faith is contagious and the more you believe in others, the more they will believe in you. I learned the real purpose of forgiveness is to free yourself from the suffering and irritation that is holding you back.

High school athletics helped me overcome one of my life's greatest obstacles, the death of a friend. While standing at a fellow Shelton High School athlete's funeral, I began to truly grasp the impact of high school athletics on my life. His death was an unexpected tragedy that devastated my community. However, as an athletic community, we all came together to support his fellow teammates, the basketball team. As an athletic body, we mourned his death together, relied on each other for support, learned a new respect for one another, and became tighter than ever before. I experienced the true power of love and how it affected all of us. I learned to be grateful for every moment and the importance of memories. Memories are what last. As people come and go, it is the memories we hold on to, for as long as there is a memory of them, they live in our hearts forever.

From double session soccer tryouts to seemingly impossible track workouts, I have learned the value of hard work. Athletics is not about winning; rather it's about improving as an individual and growing as a team. It's about seeing how far you can push yourself without giving up. Athletics has taught me to persevere when times get tough, and that success does not build character, failure builds character.

High school athletics has also given me the ability to work outside of my social group and build relationships with individuals I otherwise would have never met. As an underclassman, I looked up to the upperclassmen as the perfect role models, and I can say without a doubt, these boys changed me as an individual and as an athlete. Thanks to athletics, I built friendships that will last a lifetime. Now, as a captain of two sports teams, I find myself leading and shaping my teammates. Seeing my teammates; my brothers, grow, improve, and succeed, I can see the differences that I am making in their lives.

High school athletics has been one of my greatest teachers and one of my biggest passion. I am forever thankful for the memories, the values, and the lessons I have gained from them. However, I was never alone in my journey. I will be forever thankful for the sacrifices my parents, coaches, and teammates made for me; their sacrifices along with the values and lessons I learned shaped my life, and I don't know where I would be without them.

