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**Wellness and Nutrition - keeping healthy in college:**

 Wellness means different things to different people. Most of the time it could mean eating healthy and getting the daily requirement of exercise; others it can be or isn’t a part of their lifestyles, or it can be physical versus mental health. But overall, wellness and healthy living, just like how what it means, can vary from person to person on what their lifestyle requires and what their personal wellness goals are. However, many individuals feel that wellness affects how they feel about themselves, whether on the inside, on how their body runs, or on the outside, and whether they feel confident in their body, overall.

Sometimes the person doesn’t really have a choice on whether they can be healthy or not. Many athletes hold themselves to a higher standard of what they eat, how they work-out, and having to continuous heal their bodies while still training towards their peak performance. To me, wellness is being able to perform at my peak, unable to get sick while everyone else lies in bed, and doing what makes me feel good, inside and out. Wellness to me, however, isn’t just a physical challenge on how healthy I can eat or how many sprints I can run before getting sick, but also a large mental game.

Many of my teachers and coaches that I have had in the past commented on how I’m more of a thoughtful person, or, when I’m playing, I think before acting, and read to make decisions; which is both a good and bad thing. While reading a test or the field, and rather than act on first instinct, I stew about it, becoming anxious in my decision making and hesitant. I have the tendency to fear the potential failure that I don’t allow myself to do what I want or know I should be doing; but when I go ahead with it, I already told myself this was a failed attempt and my actions follow my thoughts. I took myself out of it before I even started my tasks.

Right now I recognize that my wellness could be better. I could perform better physically and mentally; on the field and in the classroom. Taking out the athletics, and focusing on myself as a person, I know I could sleep more; rather than going to bed at late hours only to get up early morning the next day. Nutrition wise, I’m no health-nut. I enjoy the usual protein, whole wheat, fruits, and vegetables, but any current or past health craze in beyond me; I know that moderation is key, but on some days, moderation is still a little too much give. Now going back towards an athletic mindset, I recognize I should take more time to run more or push myself past my limit rather than just simply meeting it. The harder that I push myself in practice and during training either with or without the rest of the team is what decides how good of a player I am, not simply my abilities.

I try very hard to maintain my wellness during my studies. I know that I easily complete the physical aspect with morning runnings, games, practices, and team lifts, and walking everywhere outside of that, but there’s the healthy eating and mental health. Maintaining the healthy eating consists of buying fruits and veggies to have outside of the dining hall, and fulfilling daily nutritional requirements that help my body run efficiently and do well in classes by providing brain power, in a way. Sometimes when anxiety and my mental health drops, I recognize when to take a break and calm down. Sometimes all it takes is to talk to someone, a friend or professional, and try to realize that I am not my weaknesses or failures, but that they help me get better in the long run, even though they don’t feel great at the moment.

My goal this year is to learn from others how to stay healthy and teach myself that I am capable of it. First year in college is not a time to create bad habits, or to continue old ones, but to start new good ones that I can follow well into adulthood and pass onto others. And that starts now.