



Get in the game?

Sports editor and Feature editor go head to head weighing the importance of athletics

Jonas Quirin **THE BUCS' BLADE**

It's okay not to play

“So what sports do you play?” The dreaded question.

Expectant eyes of bosses, parents, teachers and classmates wait to hear “volleyball,” “basketball,” “soccer” or something with a practice schedule, uniforms and an easy follow up question.

I laugh awkwardly as I give my response.

“Yeah, I suck at sports. So I don't play any.”

Their eyes dart to my long legs with a slightly shocked look as they think: “Now what am I going to talk to her about?”

My grandpa had asked me a similar question the other night at family dinner. He waited half-hopingly for me to say I've managed to make time for a sport between work, committees, councils, Bucs' Blade, clubs, volunteering, homework, a social life, and oh- dinner.

But I shook my head and said, “Nope, I'm still not into playing sports, Poppy.”

He leaned in closer as if he were telling me the secret to success.

“Sports improve college applications. And guys like girls who are athletic.”

For years that response used to make me feel disappointed in myself. Despite being an award-winning journalist and an involved A and B student, I never felt equal compared to anyone who was on a sports team. I grew up thinking I wasn't as good as everyone else because I couldn't run as fast, kick a soccer ball in a semi-accurate line, do a cartwheel, or withstand cold weather for long periods of time.

Now I'm not disregarding athletics, there are definitely many benefits. Obvious takeaways like learning to be part of a team, dedication, time management, pure enjoyment, and forming bonds are reason alone to participate.

But the same holds true for any other activity. There will be loyalty to that club, council, job, or whatever else it may be. You'll learn how to manage your time, and there will be extra effort needed.

I can't tell you the number of weekends I've given up for Bucs' Blade or the hours put into working on feature pages all so the average student can rush to the stack of copies, pick one up, and flip to the sports section.

It was in those midnight copy editing sessions that I developed strong relationships, with a different kind of team, on a different kind of field.

And we hardly get the same appreciation as varsity players.

Walking through the hallways, last names run across the backs of sweatshirts, athletic bags sling over muscular shoulders, and congratulations on last night's game are high-fived.

But even if your name might not stretch across the back of a jersey every Friday, don't think that what you do is overlooked.

Not playing a sport is okay.

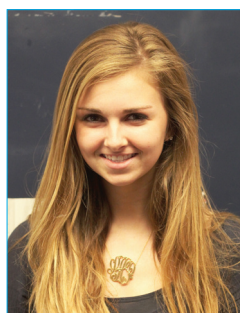
I know that athletes receive more recognition than students who are just as equally involved in choir or Science Olympiad or First Robotics or theatre.

I know that being able to put 'varsity athlete' on a college application certainly helps grant admission.

But I know it isn't everything.

You don't have to do bench presses in front of mirrors, dive into a 74 degree pool at 5 in the morning, or sprint until you have shin splints to feel accomplished.

What you do does matter. It may not be a touch-down or a personal record. But it is important.



Opinion
LANDON HUDSON

It pays to play

Wake up at 6 a.m.

Finish homework.

Attend school for eight hours.

Go to practice for two.

Go to work .

Do homework until 1 a.m.

Fall asleep.

Repeat.

Add in a packed game schedule, team dinners, family obligations, an attempted social life and oh- dinner. Now you've got a perfectly packaged stress bomb waiting to explode delivered in the form of a student athlete.

So what is it about sports that has 7.8 million high schoolers in America lose out on sleep for? It doesn't sound easy, but Nike insists, just do it.

I was in the athletic hallway before practice one day, and while I was filling up my water bottle I whined to a teammate about getting moved down in the lineup. I was getting awfully worked up about it. But then a comment made by a passerby really struck me, “Don't get so upset, it's only organized high school athletics.” So right there in the middle of the hallway surrounded by other athletes bustling off to practice or waiting in line to have a knee wrapped by the trainer, I had an awakening.

Why was I so worked up? I realized that it matters to me, I was upset because athletics are what I care about, and I feel like that can be said for most students who pull on a Buccaneer jersey. We get so worked up and complain or cry because it matters to us.

People will argue that a kid belting out a high note or working in a committee will learn the same things as one hurling a fast pitch. But I'm

going to disagree.

There are certain things that can't be taught anywhere else but on a field or court. According to TrustSport.org, longitudinal studies showed that compared to kids who did not participate in athletics, those who did had higher grades, expectations for themselves, higher self-confidence, stronger peer relationships, and the list is endless. And although other activities

build character, legendary UCLA basketball coach, John Wooden, put it best, “Sports do not build character, they reveal it.”

But when an athlete wakes up at 5 am to jump in a 76 degree pool or runs 5 miles in the rain they are not thinking “this is revealing my character.” In fact they are probably asking themselves why they do it. But there is something

indescribable that drives the athletes to willingly relinquish their blood, sweat and tears.

Maybe it's the first day of a season when the equipment rooms are unlocked. Or perhaps it's picture day when they are proud to show off their uniform despite how old or ugly. It's being surrounded by your peers in the locker room knowing you all have something you're playing for. It's the knowledge that despite any differences at practice, they would still have your back. It's complaining about who got captain but knowing you'd follow them off a cliff. It's the satisfaction after a win, knowing that it was all worth it.

But the greatest part about sports is that there is one out there for everyone. Maybe you can't throw a ball at 55 mph and wouldn't be able to serve a volleyball to save your life. There are so many sports out there, give one of them a try. See what has 7.8 million kids hooked. Nike tells us, just do it.



Opinion
BRIANNA MOYNIHAN