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DREAM Essay

Soccer has proven overall to be a great experience for me despite the many obstacles I've faced in the sport. It has provided me the opportunity to mentor and be mentored as well as has taught me a variety of important life lessons. These life lessons have strengthened personal values within me such as loyalty, respect, and perseverance.

Loyalty is one of the most crucial values to creating a successful and tight-knit team. With loyalty comes trust in yourself and your teammates and therefore it creates a great environment for growth and success. Loyalty is also a very important value for other aspects of life, such as jobs or relationships. I am extremely thankful to the sport for providing me with this value and teaching me the importance of loyalty.

In addition to loyalty, I learned the value of respect. This can easily be implemented in the rest of life as respect for yourself and for others is crucial to build relationships and be successful. Soccer taught me to respect my teammates, my coach, myself, and even my opponents.

Perhaps the biggest lesson I learned was to have perseverance. Through all of my career playing soccer my biggest challenge was my tearing my ACL. I wasn't able to play soccer for 9 months and it was extremely difficult for me to go to every practice and watch my teammates play while I couldn't so much as run. Physical therapy and my entire recovery was extremely difficult, however I loved soccer and wanted to get back to it. This obstacle taught me perseverance because I needed to get through my recovery in order to play soccer again, no matter how difficult it was.

All of these lessons are lessons I've learned through playing soccer, however there is one important lesson I learned through my choice to stop playing. After recently suffering another knee injury that regularly caused me huge amounts of pain throughout the season, I was informed by my doctor that I had two choices. I could get my meniscus removed completely, which would likely fix the pain for the next three years at the cost of severe early arthritis; or I could simply do nothing and stop playing college soccer with the trade off of having a healthier knee in the future. I chose to do nothing, as severe arthritis would hugely affect my future ability to exercise, play recreationally, or even coach. I learned that although I love soccer, I needed to choose what would be right for me in the long run. Overall, it is important to do what is best for yourself rather than doing what you want to do in the moment.

I am so thankful to Rush soccer and the sport itself for teaching me these valuable life lessons.