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# THE DECATURIAN

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# The warrior mentality



Part 4 of 6 Photo by: Emily Nielsen: Assistant Swim Coach Blake Braden and Senior Shelby Kobs

By: Emily Nielsen

Athletes often forget about the people around them as they deal with an injury. Within their pain, they sometimes lose sight of the people in front of them who are trying to get them back on their feet and back into play. As a college athlete, they have to depend on coaches and trainers to take care of them, and that's not always an easy task.

"It's a very warrior like mentality, that not wanting to feel like they've given up," Blake Braden said, Millikin University's Assistant Coach for the Men and Women's Swim team. In his three years as an assistant coach here at Millikin he has had his share of athletes with injuries.

"There are a lot of injuries, especially in swimming that people don't think about. You know they think that it's a noncontact sport, and it is, but you have issues with shoulders and knees and ankles and hips as well as various injuries that can plague a swimmer that people don't really think about," Braden said.

Athletes don't like to ask for help;

they don't want to ask for help, and they won't ask for help until the pain becomes unbearable. Then and only then, will they go off to the trainers. For a coach, especially from Braden's point of view, the signs that they are injured show early on, especially with athletes who have previous conditions. With that knowledge, it's fear that enters the mind of a coach when they see their player grit their teeth and suck in that breath in an attempt to downplay the pain.

"I'm okay with stretching; it's the grimace that scares a coach," Braden said.

Megan Kushner, a junior Athletic Training major has seen what happens when the athlete finally steps into the training room, usually days after the injury occurred. She knows, through learning and her experiences, the procedures to effectively find the injury and solve the problem, and that sometimes means that the player must sit out.

"They ask a lot of questions, they usually ask to talk to the head AT

because they don't trust us [students] and they only listen to the lowest number [of time out of play] and then try to beat that number, or just ignore how long they are out for; that's a little annoying," Kushner said.

Coaches then deal with the aftermath of the athlete's injury; oftentimes it's with an irate and desperate player gunning to return. The emotions can manifest in anger, depression, and refusal to accept limits that were placed upon them.

"For an athlete to try and see the bigger picture is extremely difficult. To try and explain to them that they have to sit out of the water for two weeks - because sitting out for two weeks will help you in terms of being able to finish the last two months instead of trying to finish the next two weeks and sitting out the rest of the year - moral gets very low when an athlete can't see that sitting out for a while will do them good" Braden said.

As a coach, all he can do to the best of his ability is talk to his swimmers and try to drill that concept into their

heads, sometimes that will take a week, and other times they won't fully understand that concept until they've retired and are free from the sport.

Once an athlete is told that they have to sit out for what may be a game, or the rest of the season, they go into what is best described as depression. Their entire world has been shifted, and that takes a toll. Luckily, the trainers have been taught how to deal with that as well.

"We have to do psycho-social classes so that we can deal with athletes when they break down and cry or have an emotional breakdown. We have to get those checked off every semester. There are different ways to check off on them, anything from depression to anorexia. We are taught different techniques to help the athlete get over the injury and be ready to return to play, or not return to play," Kushner said.

Athletes also try and place blame, and that usually falls on the coach's shoulders as well. So they have to be tough, they have to take the criticism

and anger that their athletes throw at them with a blink of an eye while reassuring them that this period is only temporary, if they take care of the problem and continue to go to their rehab appointments. Showing any bit of weakness will only add to the athletes fire, and that's something a coach cannot afford.

"As a coach, what you try to do, as best you can, [is to] try [and] help them see that side. You try to push them in terms of just having a talk with them and making sure they try to see the big picture of things," Braden said.

The biggest fact that athletes tend to overlook is the fact that their coaches and athletic trainers have probably been in the same exact place that they are in now.

"Most AT students are former athletes, and so part of the athletic training code is that you ask other athletic trainers what injury made you become an AT," Kushner said who has a labrum and rotator cuff tear she acquired at an earlier age than most.

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## Institute for science entrepreneurship speaker series grows

By: Emily Chudzik

The Millikin University Institute for Science Entrepreneurship has been providing students with a hands-on networking opportunity since its creation by Dr. David Horn, Dr. George Bennett and Dr. Casey Watson in December 2012.

The mission of ISE is to connect Millikin University, its students and the greater community to opportunities for personal, professional and organizational advancement through science entrepreneurship.

Perhaps the best example of this mission is the speaker series, this year sponsored by Busey. Science entrepreneurship students are invited to a dinner before the presentation to talk with people from local businesses and members of the community. ISE has eight speakers this academic year, which provides students with

great opportunities.

"Decatur is home to many companies that have a national or international reach," Dr. David Horn, professor of biology and one of ISE's founding members, said. "The Science Entrepreneurship Speaker Series provides Millikin students with the opportunity to meet with representatives of these companies, and in some cases, has led to internships and other opportunities for the students."

However, these events aren't just for students interested in science entrepreneurship. Currently, ISE is working on reaching out to business students, as the speaker series can be quite beneficial to them, as well.

Mikayla Shaw, a senior communication major with an emphasis in public relations, has been working as an undergraduate fellow for ISE as part of her JMS project. She's in charge of event planning

for each dinner and is creating a business plan to expand the series. Her biggest task right now is to generate more publicity for the events.

"The speaker series is, at its core, for networking purposes. I assist in identifying and bringing in representatives from local companies and organizations. [The dinners and presentations are] planned about a year in advance, and we have two more this year," Shaw said.

The speaker series provides an opportunity to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem in the sciences through networking and learning more about the speaker's entrepreneurial endeavors.

While the dinner is invite only, the presentation portion is open to all students.

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chusted@millikin.edu

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