

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE OCAA

# sweat

WINTER 2015

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The Debate on Makeup in Sport

LIFE AFTER SPORT

FAITH AND THE GAME

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## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



I would like to welcome readers to the 2015 Winter Edition of *sweat* Magazine, the official magazine of the OCAA and your source of information for Ontario collegiate sport.

On behalf of the OCAA Executive Committee and our 30 member institutions, I would like to thank the faculty at Humber College and the journalism students who have contributed to this fine publication. We are blessed to see commitment and excellence on the field of play with our student athletes, and with *sweat* Magazine, we see similar traits in the journalism students who spend endless hours researching, interviewing and writing for this magazine.

I would like to formally welcome the University of Toronto-Mississauga as the 30th member of the OCAA. UTM has been a long-standing and valued member of the Ontario Colleges Committee on Campus Recreation (OCCCR), and will now participate in varsity competition right away starting with the 2014 OCAA cross country championships.

The OCAA is known nationally for their hosting excellence and I would like to thank

all of the hosts for their efforts in the upcoming provincial championships. Thank you to Durham, St. Clair, Fleming, Centennial, Fanshawe and Redeemer.

On the national front, I would also like to recognize the hosts of the 2014/15 CCAA National Championships. Sheridan leads off in the fall semester with men's soccer, followed in the winter semester by Mohawk with men's basketball. I am confident that all of our guests will leave Ontario with great memories of both the competition and our hospitality.

In an effort to increase varsity sports in the OCAA, new sport is the hot topic around the table. Cricket, men's and women's rugby 7's, and indoor track are all being looked at for inclusion in the near future. Stay tuned!

I would be remiss if I did not send out a sincere thank you and best wishes to Greg Stewart. Greg, who has been a respected member of the OCAA Executive, has moved on from Laurier Brantford to Lambton College. In saying that, I would like to welcome Humber's Jennifer Maclam as the new Vice President Campus Recreation (OCCCR) to the executive.

**Jim Bialek**  
OCAA President

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



An important trait in a person is the ability to look beyond the surface, to ask themselves why something is the way it is and what purpose it has. There's always going to be something that a person holds some sort of attachment to. And, for some it's

sport. No matter which sport, it can have an impact on a person.

Whether it is character building, learning to fail or developing the ability to work with others, sports is a microcosm of life. We often find ourselves chasing the somewhat elusive dream of victory, of being better than your opponent. And, in most instances, we learn that we need more than one person to help us succeed.

We're pleased to present you, with this issue of *sweat*, with stories that illustrate outstanding individuals who have battled extreme circumstances only to allow the beauty of sport to shine through. And, no matter what, these athletes have broken

through these barriers and allowed sport to become a crucial part of their lives.

In this issue we'll be looking at: sports psychology; depression; an athlete who, after overcoming cancer, found sport and many more magnificent pieces.

We look into the oddball sport of downhill unicycling, delve into religion in sport and even discuss the role that makeup plays in sport.

On another note, I'd like to welcome the University of Toronto-Mississauga Eagles to the OCAA as they've officially begun competing and look to phase in more varsity teams in upcoming semesters. You can read further about their transition into varsity sports in this issue.

Finally, I'd like to thank the *sweat* team for the superlative work that they've put forth on this magazine. Without them, this publication wouldn't be alive and I thank them for maintaining the dream of telling the beneath-the-surface stories within the OCAA.

We hope you enjoy the magazine.

**Jesse Noseworthy**  
*sweat* Editor-In-Chief

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# PHOTO CONTEST

Every year *sweat* hosts a photo contest to showcase the highs and lows, the glory and pain, and the arduous work that comes with being an athlete in the OCAA. Early mornings and late nights are just part of the job, and being able to juggle school, a personal life and still show up to practice every day is a struggle that often goes unseen. *sweat* aimed to shine a spotlight on these athletes and the inspired photographers who captured those magical moments. A multitude of fantastic entries came in, and while picking a winner is never easy, after a difficult and painstaking selection process the following entries were deemed the best of the best. *sweat* would like to thank all those who entered the contest, and give a special congratulations to Steven, Aaron and Samantha for their great shots. Each picture is not only a great photo, but a great representation of the competitive spirit in the OCAA. ■



WINNER

Steven Newman



Second Place

Aaron D'Andrea



Third Place

Samantha Shaw



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# CROSS COUNTRY

# RUNNING

By Jessica Laws

## From Uganda to Canada.

**T**he men's race started at 11 a.m. Saturday, and even though the sun had been up for hours, the ground was still soft and wet from the rain the night before. Coaches, parents and teammates avoided trekking through parts of the field because of the sappy, soggy conditions.

The starting pistol popped, the men started their three laps; an eight kilometre run through a wet, hilly field at Seneca's King campus.

The girls, who were covered in mud cheered from the sidelines. Many of them had fallen in the forest because of the slick conditions and had mud drying to their clothes and skin. Proof that the course was not going to be easy.

"Cross country is different than running track events, because you have to be able to run in different conditions so you have to be a more rounded runner and able to excel in that. You have to have a strong mental position in order to properly run cross country," says Michael Lavigne, cross country coach of the George Brown Huskies.

One runner that stands out is multidisciplinary athlete Ahmad Sangau, 23, a Human Resource Management student at George Brown College. "It's gonna get done," he says to himself when he hits the wall, "it's gonna get done," as he continues running, pushing through.

Sangau started running in primary school but took up distance running after he joined his school's cricket team.

Sangau's story begins in Kampala, Uganda in the small town of Naguru where he was the youngest son in a family with two sisters and a brother. He says he came from a very physically active family. His parents were runners.

"It's in my blood," Sangau says. "We used to run in cricket," he says smiling. "They made us run 10 kilometres pretty much every day so it's in my system."

He says growing up in Uganda they had to be very creative. It's a different world than that of the overloaded, materialistic childhood of most Canadian children. "There you create toys." Toys, he said, were made out of anything from plastic bags tied with tire tubes



Photo By Jessica Laws

Ahmad Sangau on his second lap at the OCAA Championships at Seneca's King Campus.



for soccer balls to tire tubes and barbed wire for toy cars.

“We played tag on the trees. So you jump from tree to tree. If you touch the ground or you step on the ground you’ll have the tag.”

He was introduced to the game of cricket while attending high school in 2002. Cricket’s popularity was on the rise in Uganda when it became a big part of Sangau’s life.

“Life there was simple, you don’t have a lot of responsibilities,” he says. “I played cricket, so all you do is go do your sports, come back home, mom tells you to do this, clean the compound, that’s it.” He reflects on life in Uganda with a grin and says, “It’s really simple if you’re not doing [sport] you just go to school, come back home.”

Sangau says he has made a lot more friends here in Canada than he did back home,

“I like Canada, there is a lot of opportunities, people are friendly, you meet people from all these different countries and there is always something to learn.” Sangau is a multi-sport athlete having played field hockey, tennis, lawn tennis, badminton, soccer and cricket while growing up. His parents encouraged his love of sports. However, there was a time when Sangau says his parents weren’t too pleased, “Sometimes because I got home late they didn’t like it. They stopped me from

playing cricket for about a month, then I went and begged them again and I got it back but I had a time I had to be back home.”

Sangau chose cricket over other sports for its uniqueness, “Everyone has a different skill and you have to hold your skill there to make your team win.” Sangau plays first bowler in cricket, which is the equivalent to a pitcher in baseball and was also the captain for his

**“as a coach I can say that he is another God’s gift to bowling.”**

school. He managed to beat out other under-19s to become a member of the national Ugandan team. “I was asked to go do the tryouts for under 15 in the beginning. Then played club cricket at home, then national team.” Sangau says they started out with 40 people who were invited to try out, then it went down to 30, then 20, and the cuts continued until they were left with a team of 15 players. As a member of the national team Sangau managed to earn enough money to

move out of his parents home. Although he stayed close to his parents and moved “just across the street; I wanted to give them some space” he says.

In 2009, at the age of 17, he came to Canada with the Ugandan national cricket team. On the choice of staying here in Canada Sangau says, “It was really hard, I talked to my Dad before making the decision to stay, and he said you never know you may have a better life [in Canada] than here.

“There may be bigger opportunities for you when you start your education,” he remembers his dad saying. So Sangau thought he’d give it a shot, “if it doesn’t work out, I can always go back home.” Sangau decided to not keep in touch with his national team coaches after staying in Canada because of a dispute over him staying behind.

Stories were published back home and here that suggested he had disappeared and that nobody knew he was staying behind. “I was shocked...my dad was furious,” he says of the incident. Sangau has since moved on, he was asked to join the Brampton Masters Cricket Club after they too saw the potential in his ability as a cricketer and his love of the game. Playing on the national team for Uganda taught Sangau life lessons he will always remember; “Trust...cricket is a very long game and it needs a lot of patience...so I learned to be patient. Learn to take responsibility, be calm under pressure and control my temper,” he says.

His commitment is evident in the amount of months he dedicates to cricket. The season is just five months, but he explains, “If you include the preseason practice it’s nine months.”

As an active member of the Brampton Masters Cricket Club, Sangau plays for several of their teams including their elite division team. According to the club’s website they were first established in 1996. “BMCC is the only club that has welcomed players from around the world to play cricket in Canada,” their site reads. A past coach of Sangau and coach of the current U-19 Canadian national team, Mukesh Narula, says that Sangau is extremely committed and passionate about learning.

“He’s very gifted, as a coach I can say that he is another God’s gift to bowling,” says Narula of Sangau’s talents. He has what it takes, he just needs to have more self-confidence if he wants to make it to the next level, Narula explains.

Sangau’s cricket coach, Johnny Bujan, corroborated what Narula had to say of San-



Courtesy of Ahmad Sangau

Ahmad Sangau on the Ugandan National Cricket Team.



gau, “He’s very humble, very disciplined and very committed. As a player he is a fighter on the field,” he says. Bujan says Sangau may not have the patience to be a batsman but he can definitely see Sangau on the national team in the next three years.

As an active athlete with the George Brown Huskies for the past four years, Sangau has played on the baseball team and is currently a cross country runner. He was forced into taking the 2013 season off due to an ankle injury he sustained while playing cricket on an unlevelled field. Sangau is also the team captain of the George Brown cricket team that participates in tournaments yearly. But he isn’t just involved in student athletics at the college, he also works as a student life ambassador who helps to promote school events, and get students to come out and participate. He hosts movie days every Friday and an annual GBC World Cup soccer tournament. He even took a walk on the runway sporting George Brown gear and attire. “I only modeled once,” he says with a sly smile.

His cross country coach, Michael Lavigne, says that Sangau has shown some improvements in his abilities as a cross country runner this year. Sangau admits, “I’ve increased my endurance; my coach helped me to do that.” Conflicts in scheduling makes coaching tougher. Lavigne would ultimately like to see his athletes at least three times a week, but he is limited due to Sangau’s many responsibilities and hectic schedule.

“In the OCAA everyone is a student first,” Lavigne says “It’d be great to be in the NCAA system where you pretty much tell the students this is where, these are the classes you take and you have to be at this spot at this time.” But Lavigne says it’s okay if they can’t make it to every practice because he keeps in constant contact with his athletes to make sure they are keeping up with their training. Cross country athletes usually practice anywhere between four and six hours with runs that they do outside of practising with their team. Lavigne has had the opportunity to see Sangau grow and mature and become a bigger part of the Huskies cross-country team.

“He’s contributed a lot more to the team, not just in his abilities as a runner but I think that he has matured over the past year, so I think he is more ready for the challenges with running and school and just a social life,” he says. Lavigne describes Sangau as a “shy guy, he’s a friendly shy guy... he’s not really an outspoken individual by any stretch of the imagination” which isn’t far off from the description Sangau’s best friend gave.

His friend and ‘brother from another mother’ is Shaheer Bajoo, 31, who attends

George Brown in the Accounting Program. They met on their first day at school in September 2011 and Bajoo continues to be a support system for Sangau. Bajoo describes Sangau like most of his coaches do, “Loyal, hard working, very determined, shy, super-shy and very humble,” he says. Sangau’s busy schedule doesn’t get in the way of hanging out with the boys as Bajoo explains that there is no excuses for having enough time to hang out. A group of his friends, Bajoo included, will go out to his games and meets in order to spend time with Sangau. “We are all supportive of him...I’ll support him in any way I can,” he says of his best friend.

Sangau plans to head back to George Brown after graduation for a fifth and final year to take the post graduate Sport and Event Marketing program. Regarding his

professional career, he says he hopes to work for a professional sports organization, that’s “if I get all my dreams right.” For Sangau the next major professional goal is to make it onto the Canadian national cricket team and both of his cricket coaches think he has it in him. He is hopeful for a great cricket season this year. He is just completing the first lap of what he hopes is a very long race with many more years to come.

However, the number one personal goal for Sangau is making it back home to Uganda. “It’s very expensive,” he says, but if he gets his way he will be heading there sometime soon to spend some much needed time with his parents. “I am planning to go next year if all goes well. Cross your fingers and toes,” he says with a big smile. ■



Photo By Jessica Laws

Sangau plans for next year.



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Photos By Albert Williams

Members of Humber College's game prep team at work before a home game.

# UNSUNG HEROES

By Albert Williams

Behind the scenes  
with OCAA support staff.



**M**onths before chants of “Defense! Defense! Defense!” fill auditoriums, weeks before players’ perspiration soaked bodies are followed closely by the pensive glares of fans, even days before the team huddles in the dug-out just before going out to battle for victory, there is work being done by a team of support staff. From the grounds people to the managers, the supporting staff of varsity teams all play an important role in ensuring everything runs smoothly for all leagues within the OCAA.

There are 30 schools in the OCAA with widely varied enrollment numbers - some schools boast more than 30,000 students while others make do with fewer than 1,000. This discrepancy plays into the varsity program, especially in the area of staff complement. Fanshawe, Humber, Mohawk and

Seneca all appear different on paper, yet the diligent work of their support staff creates a similar thread that ties them together with a common purpose.

Ian Blundy is the facility co-ordinator at Seneca, yet while he sits at the sewing machine working on what he reveals to be “laundry straps” to help with the sorting of jerseys after they are washed, it’s clear he is so much more than his title to the Sting.

“I’ve been here for more than 34 years,” he says with a smile. “There are current students whose parents were athletes while I was here.” Blundy says it makes him proud and happy when parents take their children up to him and recount stories of how he impacted their lives. “This is kind of what makes your work easy,” he says. “Knowing your work and what you do still brings joy to so many students even after they have left school.” Blun-

dy oversees a team of seven who prepare the grounds and equipment for home and extramural games. He says he delights in working with young people. “They keep me young,” he says with a laugh.

Blundy is winding down what could be his final season with the Seneca Sting, but says he is still “operating on all cylinders” with the hope of finishing several projects before retirement. “I have what you may call a bucket-list,” he says, gazing out onto the soccer field while giving an impromptu tour of the campus. “Hoping to see the completion of the renovations of the arena, new lights, and new paint job. When you do a service for so long as I have been doing, it just feels good to know you made a difference.”

The work of Blundy and the other support staff was highly praised by Linda Stapleton, director of sports and recreation at Seneca

**“We want our students to have the best experience. That’s why we go to great lengths to make **game day** as big as possible here at Humber.”**



Duaine Bowles with members of the home team before a game.





**“We operate like a family.”**

Ian Blundy in his office at Seneca.

College. “We operate like a family,” Stapleton says “the students respond positively to Blundy and all other team members due to the keen interest that is taken in their welfare.” Stapleton says a holistic approach is taken to students’ well being, and the members of the supporting staff are instrumental in ensuring the students are well-rounded individuals. “Physiotherapists, counselors, a range of people work with students to ensure they are balanced,” she says. “I cannot imagine the varsity program without this hardworking team.”

Humber College is also student-focused. “We do this for the students,” says Duaine Bowles, the varsity operations coordinator with the Hawks.

“We want our students to have the best experience. That’s why we go to great lengths to make game day as big as possible here at Humber.” Bowles, a former student athlete, directly supervises a team of 33 students with responsibilities that include setting up for games, keeping scores and recording statistics of play during home games. “We have a strong team, so we put in work to ensure [we] wow students when they walk into the auditorium or onto the field.”

The size of the crew at Humber creates a strong contrast with the five-member set-up team at Mohawk College. Adam Njauw, team manager for the men’s basketball team with the Mountaineers, says it takes “roughly 30 minutes” to prepare the court for home games. “I have a small team that ensures the court is prepared,” Njauw says. “Benches are out and the team has all it needs for the game.”

Njauw’s work does not end there, as he does the shot clock, stats and just about any other odd job that needs to be done to ensure the team is ready. His involvement has been so indelible over his five years of service to the school that the athletic department presented

him with the school spirit award, an accolade that is usually reserved for students. “I enjoy what I do,” Njauw says. “The students are great to work with and I do all I can to bring out the best in them.”

For Rob Werstine bringing out the best in student athletes means keeping them physically fit and injury free. Werstine is one of just a few registered physiotherapists within the OCAA, and says he enjoys investing in students’ health at Fanshawe. “We have a sufficient number of therapists,” he says.

The Fowler Kennedy Sports Medicine Clinic is cited by Werstine as a sign of Fanshawe’s commitment to improving the quality of student health. “It eliminates the barriers that many students encounter in seeking help for injuries,” Werstine says. He adds that consultation is done with other athletic therapists within the OCAA membership, as at the end of the day the welfare of all students is the goal. “We get together to discuss common problems and even find solutions in catering to our student population,” he says. Werstine says heavy is not the term he would use to describe his workload, as Fanshawe has a team that works effectively together.

The old adage of “no ‘I’ in ‘team’” seems more theory than practice in the sports world where superstar athletes emerge daily. It’s even more rare to highlight the unglamorous work that goes into ensuring the athletes are adequately prepared to bring their best to games. While the spectators climb down from the high of an intense game, after the last whistle is blown, signaling the end of play, and even after the auditorium is cloaked in darkness, members of the support staff will be working to keep OCAA athletics strong. ■



Measuring the net before the game.



SPOTLIGHT

# LIFE AFTER SPORT

By Vanessa Campbell

Photo By Vanessa Campbell

Anthony Batchelor, former all-time OCAA scoring leader.



**F**or athletes who live and breathe the game they love, it seems like a no brainer that they would pursue it professionally, but many have to find other paths to keep sport in their lives. Just ask Emma, Anthony and Jordan.

Emma Pellegrino, 22, is a goalkeeper for the Seneca Sting. She's been playing soccer all of her life and coaches three teams on the side. Before becoming a goalkeeper, she studied Early Childhood Education at George Brown, but it was after she took a job at a retirement home she realized working with the elderly was what she was interested in. Pellegrino currently studies Gerontology at Seneca.

"I coach at a recreational level now, but I have the certifications to coach at a higher level, like rep or OPDL," says Pellegrino.

"When I was growing up, my dream was to be the first woman trainer for the Italian men's national soccer team."

While going professional was on her radar, for as long as she can remember it was an injury which lead her to the interest that would eventually be competing for her time.

After first completing a Health and Fitness Promotion program at Humber, she moved on to study Penology. Suddenly, the summers she dedicated to coaching had to share her time with working with the elderly at a senior's home.

Pellegrino says that the idea of pursuing coaching or even playing professionally is still high on her list, but working with seniors is

also a passion of hers; if it ever came down to it, she would try to juggle both.

"With the recreation coaching that I do, I have the time to work at the retirement home and then I have time to coach in the evening."

"But if I were coaching full time, I would obviously be working at the home part-time."

Things are a little different for Anthony Batchelor. The 29-year-old Durham College alumni was a college basketball player from Seattle and, until recently, the all-time scoring leader in the OCAA.

"I love basketball so much that it helped me with my grades. I think I'm okay but I also think that people kind of put the spotlight on me and I became the talk," he says

"I don't really do anything other than basketball. When I was in school, it was just school and basketball. I wasn't really the going-out kind of guy, so if I wasn't at home doing my homework, I was at the gym. So I guess I was getting better without wanting to get better. Basketball's fun for me," says Batchelor. "That's my exercise, that's what I did growing up. All I know is basketball. I wasn't trying to get to the professional level, I was just doing something I enjoyed doing."

But some thought he had the talent to go pro.

"I'm not saying that going pro never crossed my mind, but coming from the U.S. I kind of got my reality check on whether I'd be able to make it to that level. Overseas was an option. I was offered a contract but I declined it because what I was offered I could've made



Photo By Martin Bazyl  
Emma Pellegrino.

in North America. And I wasn't too comfortable with that. If I went overseas, I would've had to do different things with my money. I'd have no pension, no benefits."

Batchelor might have been skilled on the basketball court but that wasn't his priority. His main interest was in law and security.

After graduating Durham College, Batchelor went on to work border security in the Yukon.

"My choices were either Victoria, British Columbia or a lot of other isolated posts. I did apply for a position in Victoria but it wasn't full-time and at the time I preferred full-time. So I ended up in the Yukon. They were just filling in spots and I just went with it," says Batchelor.

**"If I wasn't at home doing my homework, I was at the gym."**



Photo By Vanessa Campbell



“I had a good support system. I had a lot of people who were telling me how it’d be an experience that not many people would get in a lifetime and I agreed with them,” he says.

Experiences aside, a full-time job in the field he always wanted to be in also allowed him to pay off his student debt, which he did in just three years.

Today he works in Canadian customs at the Toronto Pearson International Airport and he coaches at Durham as a way of keeping sport in his life.

“Now that I’m back in the city, I’m a part of the Durham College team as an assistant coach. I play a little bit of outside basketball. But when I was in the Yukon, it was so isolated, so I was kind of on a hiatus. I’m just starting to get back into it,” says Batchelor.

As for his future, he says he sees himself moving back to the States, granted he gets a similar job closer to home.

Batchelor also mentioned that one of his biggest struggles going “pro” was dealing with his age.

“I’m getting older. When I did the Raptors tryout, I was 24 or 25, and in basketball years that’s kind of old. You’re usually in the league or somewhere at a high level by then and I wasn’t even there yet.”

“I tried to think in the mind of a GM or something and asked myself, ‘how long am I going to last?’ If I went overseas, I think I may have had about 10 years max. And if I did that, what would I have done next? At the time, the economy was weak in Canada and the U.S., so getting a job afterward would’ve been tough. It would’ve been all gravy if I did the basketball thing but after that, I might have struggled and I didn’t want to do that.”

The “what next?” question wasn’t only being asked by Batchelor. 22-year-old Jordan Darlington is in his final year at Seneca after competing on Jamaica’s olympic volleyball team this past summer.

The Recreation and Leisure student says he isn’t so sure about how he’ll manage to keep sport in his life on a professional level.

“My old coach put in a word for me because the Jamaican team was looking for recruits. They invited me to come out for tryouts, I made the final

12 and we went to the Caribbean tournament in Trinidad. We could’ve done a lot better in it but the coaching staff wasn’t that good, but we came fourth,” says Darlington. “If we came first or second, we could have made it into the Olympics.”

Darlington depends heavily on his coach for advice on opportunities, and said he has been his biggest inspiration.

“Before I left to come back to Canada, the management team was talking about bringing me back next year.”

Darlington hopes to pursue volleyball on a professional level, but isn’t too informed on the steps required to do so.

“He makes a lot of things look very easy,” said Shane Timms, the Head Coach for the Seneca men’s volleyball varsity team.

“He’s definitely got the ability, it’s just a matter of him being a young guy, and having the athletic maturity of knowing what your body can do and getting it to do what the guys on the highest world stage are doing.”

No matter how talented, it’s difficult to achieve the dreams of going pro.

One of the issues was, for a long time, Canada wasn’t looked at when it came to sports, but in the last few years they’ve gained notoriety. Though the progress is slow, there is some movement happening. Another reason Darlington suggests, is young athletes feel uninformed about how to pursue such a career. Does the problem lie with coaches and other administrative staff not informing young athletes about how to chase their dreams? Or is it up to representatives of international organizations to scout? How hard is it for Canadian athletes to get recognized more often?

Timms said that no one’s really to blame for lack of exposure, and that getting recognized by teams across the world is challenging in itself.

“It’s mostly about self-promotion and experience, especially with volleyball. If the athlete really wants to pursue that and make a career out of that, then you have to be really good at self-promoting,” says Timms.

Going professional in the sport that you love would seem ideal to any athlete, but what are some factors that would affect that outcome?

For Emma it’s her love for Gerontology, for Anthony it’s his age, interest in the law, as well as his need for long-term financial stability. And for Jordan, it’s about timing, dedication and self-promotion. ■



Photo By Vanessa Campbell

Jordan Darlington.



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# ROOKIE YEAR

By Jesse Noseworthy



University of Toronto-Mississauga  
makes its competitive debut in the  
OCAA.

Photos Courtesy of the University of Toronto Mississauga.



The birth of the University of Toronto-Mississauga (UTM) Eagles is set to take place, adding much needed varsity competition to the courts of the newly renovated gym.

Following a \$24-million upgrade to the athletics department in 2006, UTM is gearing up for varsity competition in the OCAA.

While some question the decision to join the OCAA, UTM Director Ken Duncliff feels that the league is a perfect fit.

“As of 2006 we had a building that could actually host a higher level of sport,” he says. “We needed to give that offering [varsity competition] to students here, or at least make it more available to them.”

Facilities at UTM include three gymnasiums, sports fields, high performance centres, three squash courts, dance and fitness studios, indoor running tracks, a pool and whirlpool, an olympic weightlifting room, and a fully functional gym.

Prior to 2014, UTM fields were used as practice and training camp facilities for the Toronto Argonauts.

While UTM students could still compete for different varsity teams at University of Toronto schools, commuting for practices and games was a growing concern. The school found that the demands of sending students upwards of 45 minutes off campus to practice was taking away from their studies and was a general nuisance.

“It’s becoming very prohibitive for students to access sports at the St. George and Scarborough campuses,” Duncliff says. “This gives students the choice.”

As of last year more than 60 UTM athletes were commuting to other campuses for games.

“There was some thinking a few years ago that we’d try and put the UofT varsity program across all three campuses,” Duncliff says. “We did some extensive research and it didn’t really make sense.”

Duncliff says that with full agreement from his counterparts at St. George and Scarborough, the Mississauga campus will be competing as the UTM Eagles. Athletes will still receive a UofT degree, but they’ll be playing in the OCAA.

Students can make the choice to commute to other campuses and play for the UofT Varsity Blues or play for the new UTM Eagles.

One main focus at UTM over the last few years was their extramural programs.

“A lot of teams have been strong enough to compete against varsity teams,” says Varsity

Program Co-ordinator, Jack Krist.

Krist says that he’s made every effort to get his athletes into exhibition games against varsity teams to show them what the next level of play is like.

“This isn’t intramurals anymore,” says Krist in regard to adjusting to varsity play.

“I’m excited,” he says. “I don’t know what it’s going to take for us to be a big force in the OCAA, but I’m excited at the challenge and I know that my coaches and all the athletes are also excited.”

Cross Country coach, Adam Hassan, says he had little time to prepare for the inaugural season.



“I got the job on August 15,” he says. “I had pretty much no time to recruit.”

Hassan says that coaches are normally hired earlier on in the summer.

Before coaching for the Eagles, he competed as a runner for four years at George Brown and coached there for five.

“I’m excited at the opportunity to build a program from ground up,” says Hassan. “Starting from the ground is easier than coming into an established program.”

One of Hassan’s runners, Lauren Brewster, says that UTM can only grow.

“I think it’s going to expand and just really

get bigger from here on out,” she says. “We’re going to get the name out, get bigger and really make a presence in the OCAA.”

David Zheng, a fourth-year badminton player at UTM, says he’s very excited to be competing in varsity sports this year.

“I think it’s only up from here,” says Zheng on the future of UTM. “It’s kind of sad knowing that I’m leaving soon.”

Zheng has been involved around the UTM campus for the last few years and says he’s been hearing about them joining varsity play for a couple of years now.

“There has been some challenges obviously with it being the first year of varsity here,” he says. “But I feel like the administration has been pretty good in trying to get everything together. They seem to deliver every time.”

Zheng points to the fact that administration has been very cooperative with the concerns of athletes and that the athletes have been involved throughout the entire transition.

Fellow badminton player, Holy Wong, says she’s just excited to have the opportunity to play.

“I believe it’s a really good chance for us to join into the varsity level,” she says. “There’s has been a lot of people who have wanted to compete at that level and haven’t gotten the chance so it’s a great experience.”

Kirst says some athletes have been waiting upwards of two years for a varsity program. Unfortunately for some, UTM may be looking to recruit younger athletes. The school was specifically targeting younger students to get involved in athletics to ensure the program’s longevity.

“We’re trying to pick a lot of first, second and third year players so that when we do get those league sports (basketball and volleyball), we’ll be carrying at least somewhat a roster of players that have played for a while together,” Kirst says.

He says athletes are “popping out of the woodwork.”

Looking ahead, UTM is expecting to add a total of five sports to the varsity program over the next five years. In 2017-18 they hope to bring varsity basketball and volleyball to their campus, which are a big draws in colleges throughout the province.

College sports fans can expect to hear ‘go Eagles’ chants at arenas near them as varsity begins to pick up for the newest member of the OCAA. ■





# HIT THE GROUND RUNNING

By Shaneza Subhan

Courtesy of George Brown College

Hannah Turnbull.

## “Am I going to die?”

**T**hat was Hannah Turnbull’s big question; and the doctor’s response, “Well I hope not.”

Three years ago, she was preparing for the worst. At 23-years-old, cross country runner Hannah Turnbull was diagnosed with a rare form of uterine cancer in August 2011. When she first received the news, Turnbull was shocked. She had been blaming fatigue and a run-down feeling on her busy summer schedule.

“I had no energy so I went and got a physical as well as a blood test and that’s when they found it,” she said. “They called me on a Friday and I was actually at work at the time, but they told me to come in right away.”

Turnbull remembers exactly how she felt that day, saying it was surprising and upsetting. “Everyone was really worried and upset,” she says. “Even though it happens, you don’t expect someone who’s so young to get sick.”

Turnbull was first diagnosed at age 20 and her family doctor had no idea what the rare form of cancer was. So rare in fact that she remembers how he actually had to search for it on the internet and then transfer her to a specialist.

“Dealing with a rare type of cancer was definitely a bad time in my life and I was pretty sad about it, but my family and friends were really supportive,” she says.

Turnbull was treated at Juravinski Hospital’s cancer clinic, where, according to her, she was lucky to discover that the only doctor who specializes in that rare form of cancer just happened to be in Hamilton, her hometown.



“They were super nice there but it was a bit scary only because you don’t know what to expect,” she says. “Other than that, my nurse was nice and the doctors were great.”

Turnbull’s younger sister, Emily was the first person she turned to while she was going through all of this.

“My sister came with me to the doctor’s appointment so she knew right away,” Turnbull says.

“Hannah is and always has been a very independent woman and when she was diagnosed, that didn’t change,” Emily says.

Week by week, Emily accompanied her sister to doctor’s appointments and made sure she was available whenever her sister needed anything.

“It’s very hard to see a family member go through such a hard and scary time,” Emily says.

Turnbull remembers shopping for wigs and describes it as a “surreal sort of time.”

“I didn’t lose any hair, although they expected me to,” she said. “I had to do all of the chemo classes and ultimately, I was worried about losing my hair.”

“We both went to a hair and makeup class on how to deal with all of the changes your body will go through,” Emily says.

Those were the worst days, she says when

she went wig shopping. “It was stressful and upsetting because it made it more real in my mind.”

Turnbull also says chemo classes were hard for her to attend because it was upsetting to see a class full of women at different stages of cancer.

“I was feeling fine at that point, but some of the other girls in class had fully lost their hair and there were a lot of people who weren’t doing very well,” Turnbull says.

“It made me really appreciate all the time I get to spend with my sister and I really look up to her for always having a positive outlook on her situation during and after,” Emily says. “I’m very happy that she is living life to the fullest and healthy enough to be such a good athlete right now.”

Although Turnbull was not sick at the time, the head coach of George Brown College’s cross country team and her own coach, Michael Lavigne, shared his experience working with her.

“From last year to this year, she has improved significantly,” Lavigne says. “When she came in last year she wasn’t a serious runner by any stretch of the imagination.”

She ended up making the team and has seen steady improvement throughout the season, according to her coach.

Persistence pushed Turnbull to become a stronger runner in the year she’s been with the team.

Lavigne keeps his athletes motivated, by encouraging each athlete individually and tries to find what works for them.

“Sometimes, she gets a little comfortable in her pace, so it has to hurt a bit to make her push through and keep going,” he says. “That’s the thing about running, you want to have a bit of pain in there and that means you’re working hard.”

Her hard work and dedication has paid off.

“It’s taking someone who’s a beginner runner and then bringing them into a varsity program and essentially teaching them the ins and outs of running,” Lavigne says on Turnbull’s experience with running.

Turnbull had a lot to say about her coach who constantly pushed her to improve her skills as a runner.

“My coach is honestly awesome,” said Turnbull. “I’m not one of the strongest members of the team but I’m improving a lot from last year and honestly, I’m happy to be better than I was last year.”

Turnbull says Lavigne always worked on things that she specifically needed to get bet-

ter at.

Overall, Lavigne is glad Turnbull is a part of the team because of her efforts to ensure there’s a good environment within the group.

Turnbull herself said she enjoys running and finds it acts like an anti-depressant because it makes her happy, with the bonus of keeping her fit.

“My mom runs marathons and I’ve been starting to run half marathons which will hopefully work up to full marathons one day,” Turnbull says. “Running releases endorphins and I feel like it’s a positive thing to do for me.”

Being on George Brown’s cross country team, she has made a lot of friends and enjoyed being part of a team.

Turnbull was never involved in sports at the time she was sick at University of Toronto. When she entered remission in 2012, she then got involved in cross country in September 2013.

“I feel like before I was sick, I didn’t care as much about being active and being healthy,” Turnbull says. “Once I went into remission, I figured if I get to be healthy, I’d rather not take it for granted and sit around.”

Turnbull describes herself as a very busy person, so when she was put on bed rest, it wasn’t helping her case.

“Every part of my day was always being scheduled to something, so when I was sick and in bed literally all the time, it was really out of character for me and I was pretty upset,” she says.

Turnbull mentioned that a friend of hers wasn’t as fortunate as she was.

“One of my really good friends was diagnosed at the same time I was, but he had lymphoid cancer,” she says. “He passed away and it was sad, but that gave me a bit of perspective on life.”

Turnbull considers herself to be very lucky to be healthy and for going into remission so quickly.

“I was worried that I might die because there’s always that risk when you have cancer,” she says.

“I feel like when you’re young, you feel invincible,” Turnbull continued. “When you go through something like that, you appreciate being healthy whereas before, you kind of took it for granted.”

Turnbull is in remission and has been for over two years. Turnbull says it’s great to be in remission and that she’s happy, healthy and loves being a part of cross country, seeing and feeling herself improve each day. ■



Courtesy of Andrew Turnbull



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Photo By Edward Bayley

# FAITH AND THE GAME

By Ari Perlin-Bain

**O**n a cold Sunday in January in Denver, Colorado during the 2011-2012 NFL season, a 24-year-old quarterback for the Broncos was playing in the AFC Wild Card Game. He was branded as a savior by Broncos fans, bringing them from an unfortunate 1-4 record to finishing at the top of the AFC West (American Football Conference). Tim Tebow wasn't just a star athlete who helped his team make a triumphant comeback, he also reminded sports fans – with some controversial moves – that he was, first and foremost, a Christian athlete. In television sound bites from games, you can hear him chanting Biblical praises and see the black marker under his eyes; with the words John 3:16 written on it. Tebow's open expression of his Christian faith was supported by some, but seen as showboating and ludicrous by many others. His actions lead to a general conclusion, athletes should have every right to express their religious views, but should keep it away from the field. There has been criticism towards openly religious athletes.

In Ontario many college athletes identify as religious and are working to find or maintain a balance between their religion and the sport they play; but is that difficult for them to achieve?

Redeemer University College is the only school within the OCAA that embeds Christianity in their education and athletics department, and according to Jacob Wilma, a shooting guard for Redeemer's men's basketball team, they help students ensure there's no conflicts. "I think

since we're a Christian school, it's easier to not have that pressure as they're very intermingled here," says Wilma. "As long as the school continues to incorporate Christianity into our department in different ways, I won't personally ever feel the pressure of putting one over the other."

Michelle Best, a third-year student at Redeemer, and player on the women's basketball team, says the school teaches its students to incorporate Christian values that will benefit the outside communities of Hamilton, where the school is located. "What we [Redeemer] love about Christianity is that there's a real service that can come out of it," says Best.

It seems that prayer is a common method for college level athletes in Ontario to maintain a balance between their religion and sport. Wilma spends "10-15 minutes in the morning reading the Bible while eating cereal," and says it's and that it's the best way for him to stay connected to his faith.

While there are verses in the Bible to motivate athletes, in the religion of Islam, there's a bigger emphasis put on sport in its prayers and scripture. In the Qur'an, the Holy Book of Islam, Allah told the Prophet Muhammad that prayers must be done five times daily at specific times, among them being sunrise and sunset.

It's a practice many religious Muslims follow including Adil Yislam, an athlete on the Men's Basketball team at Fleming College. He says,



in order to meet the required prayer times, he must work around his practice and game schedule to ensure they don't interfere with a part of his life-long commitment to Islam. "The coaches and staff understand that my faith does mean a lot to me, but it's still up to me to communicate with them beforehand to let them know if I have to partake in a specific religious practice," says Yislam.

Syed Muhammad Rizvi is the Imam at the Jaffari Community Centre in Thornhill. He says the Centre's Sports and Recreation Board organizes sports leagues for young Muslim athletes, but are sure to schedule games to not interfere with prayer times. "I emphasize to the organizers that we don't want to break up a game for religious customs, but schedule it in such a way that when the time of prayer comes, it can be at a time of convenience for the players, say at the end of a game," says Rizvi.

In the Bible, physical activity is implied as a sign of improving strength, but in Islam, the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad directly influences Muslims to take part in a healthy lifestyle, including diet and exercise. "Islam wants its followers to remain physically fit and sport would be a means of doing that," says Imam Rizvi. "Along with Ramadan, where the Muslim will fast for 30 days straight for many hours of the day. There are many other days in the Islamic calendar where fasting is recommended, and that helps promote physical health."

It may be difficult for athletes to play their sport and not be able eat or drink at certain times. Rizvi says, in this instance, religion

must come first. "When it comes to fasting, it can be worked out depending on the timing. If the games happen to be more in the evening, the athlete can have a drink and break the fast," says Rizvi.

"The fasting during Ramadan, however, is an important issue. It cannot be neglected by sports and physical activity."

## **"Islam wants its followers to remain physically fit and sport would be a means of doing that."**

The pressure the college athlete feels at times when balancing faith and sport is immeasurable but where they can go for assistance? Dwight Hall is the director on Campus Level for the Toronto region of Athletes in Action. The initiative is set up in universities across the country allowing Christian athletes to be in a community where common interest helps them apply their faith to the sport they play. He says one of the bigger purposes of Athletes in Action is to provide the athletes with the means to remain faithful to Christianity and their sport simultaneously. "I've seen a bit of a wrestling with balancing religion and sports. It really comes down to the athlete and their own conviction," says Hall. "That's why we exist. We understand competition happens on Sundays and we help you incorporate the Lord into your sport so that

faith is by your side when you're playing."

Religion can bring a sense of goodwill and humility to athletes but some see their faith as a healing process during times of unfortunate circumstances. This is the case with Larissa McBean. A fifth-year member and former captain of the Women's basketball team at Fanshawe College. In late December 2013, McBean was involved in a car accident before a basketball tournament that left her with a severely broken arm. In her account of the situation, she says because her bones didn't heal properly over the few months after the incident, she eventually needed surgery. It was a dark time for her, but she credits her faith in Christianity and God as getting her through this unexpected ordeal in her life.

"It was bad, but the amount of prayer I did to keep me grounded, to have that humility, it let me know there's a reason this happened," says McBean.

She says putting her faith in God instead of asking the pressing questions as to why it happened, gave her the mental and physical strength to get through the aftermath of this incident.

Looking at the majority of college and professional athletes, many identify with the Christian and Muslim faith. However, there seems to have always been a lack of Jewish athletes on both levels. Jared Mintz is a former NCAA basketball player for the Lafayette Leopards and played from 2011 to 2012 for the Bnei Hasharon and Hod Hasharon teams in the Maccabi Basketball League in Israel. A Jewish athlete, he says it's because of the way a majority of Jewish individuals are raised that may result in fewer athletes in higher-caliber sports leagues. "Typically in Jewish families, you won't find people to be raised to play sports but focus more on academic achievement. I do believe, from my experience, that's more valued in Judaism than sports," says Mintz.

For the religious athlete, however, the choice of whether to share those important beliefs with the fans in the stands is a purely personal one. The overt display of Tebow did shine a critical spotlight on the mix of faith and sport, allowing for a more open discussion among religious athletes of all faiths at all levels.

In the OCAA the discussion has led to accommodation, acceptance and support. ■



Photo By Ari Perlin-Bain

Taha Ali, president of Humber College's Muslim Students Association, prays during a service at the school's North campus.





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Photo By Brendan Quinn



# ONE-WHEELED MADNESS

By Brendan Quinn

**O**n a gorgeous September morning, Jakob Flansberry and Simon Maxime Labelle decided to go hit some trails in Gatineau Park, the home territory for their local crew of bikers. Sun beams pierced the foliage to strike the forest floor in columns of light, giving everything a Disney-esque quality that made it feel as though Bambi and Thumper were about to come bounding out of the bush to surprise us. Upon entering the trails Jakob and Simon hopped on their bikes and we started shooting. It was amazing to see how easily they tackled the rocky shale and gnarly roots that crisscrossed the trails. It became quickly apparent that even though we were on some mild terrain, they were more than capable of riding anything. From boulders to berms, and jumps to drops, the boys hit a variety of topographical elements with apparent ease, with the occasional bail of course.

Oh, and this was all done on a unicycle.

The word “Unicycle” immediately conjures up images of brightly dressed clowns riding around juggling bowling pins while Julius Fucik’s Entry of the Gladiators blasts out of the speakers.

Times have changed.

There is a growing sub-culture in the action sports industry that feels biking with two wheels is just too easy. From the streets to the trails, unicycle fanatics are starting to make their presence known in the biking community. In Montreal, there is Monotreal. In Toronto there is the rather plainly named Toronto Unicyclists. In the Ottawa/Gatineau

area there are a few riders that just want to do their thing.

Jakob Flansberry, a 20-year-old Gatineau native picked up the sport at the age of ten, and hasn’t looked back since. “My dad got me a unicycle for my tenth birthday. I eventually saw some guys doing freeride unicycling on YouTube, and this is what keeps me going harder and harder all the time,” he says, the enthusiasm evident on his face. Through a mutual friend, Jakob eventually met Simone Maxime-Labelle, and their shared love of unicycling cemented a friendship now entering its fifth year. “It’s when I met Jakob that I started to do tricks,” Simone says. “At first I thought that you could only ride in the street, I didn’t know you could do mountain unicycling.”

The mutual friend eventually dropped the activity, but Jakob and Simone have been riding ever since.

Initially challenging, it isn’t an easy sport to jump right into. Most people can ride a bike, but learning how to ride a single wheel is a bit different. “It is hard to start, but once you get a few revs it gets easier and easier. The initial hurdle is tough but you get better very quickly.”

Far removed from the days of juggling clowns, unicycling has seen a lot of growth over the last ten years, but the tight knit community remains small when compared to other disciplines of cycling. This is a major reason Jakob and Simone enjoy it so much.

“It’s a smaller sport, but there are lots of

little communities and that’s what makes it cool. You learn better and faster with people who have the same love as you,” Jakob says.

At the aptly titled Unicon World Championships, an event that runs every two years in Montreal near the end of July, the entire community gets together for 11 days of madness. Not looking to limit the event to just downhill, there are a multitude of different categories the riders can compete in. Those riders looking to get involved in the technical side can participate in the trials category, where they navigate a series of man-made and natural obstacles while never setting foot on the ground. People looking for a more team oriented challenge can participate in hockey and basketball games, all on one wheel of course. This depth and variety is a major reason Ja-



Photo By Edward Bayley

Simon Maxime Labelle.

**“Unicycling is not all about the circus.”**



kob feels that unicycling is not an event in the X-Games yet; there are just too many categories to fit into a major event that also includes skateboarding and BMX. “Unicycling is not all about the circus. Sure it started there but it’s a whole different sport now. When I say to someone I’m unicycling to me it’s the same as saying I’m going biking.”

Upon leaving the trail, the boys headed back to Simone’s house to get changed and drop their bikes off. While waiting for the backyard to become available, Jakob took some time to demonstrate his skills on his DIY innovations on the classic unicycle. One of their creations was a BMX wheel, smaller and narrower than its thick and knobby cousin, with the pedals attached directly to the hub rather than the cranks

making it impossible to pedal. Instead, the trick is to take a running start and leap onto the pedals, using gravity and momentum to move. While this was certainly impressive, the friction between the tire and Jakob’s exposed calf eventually started to burn his skin.

Unicycling has its devotees, but the sport is still considered the black sheep of the greater cycling community. Some downhillers view it as a novelty, something goofy and fun but without the skill level and longevity as other forms of cycling. Still others look at it with disdain, “I watched a race once, it was like watching paint dry, except more boring” says Sean Stewart, 25 of Aylmer, a downhiller and BMXer who spends most of his free time on two wheels.

Downhill Mountain Biking can be a very risky and often painful sport, but the risk of injury is what many riders derive their passion from. Kristin Brooks, 19 of New Lowell, Ontario, has been riding and racing downhill mountain bikes ever since she was six years old. She feels that Unicycles, because of their inability to cruise without pedaling, takes away from a lot of the potential speed and thus the danger. “It [Unicycling] isn’t as intense as you would think, because you can only

go as fast as you can pedal you aren’t going to crash as hard as you would on a regular bike because you just don’t have the speed.” She continues, “if you don’t want to do a tricky section you have the option to just get off and walk, that makes it a lot easier to avoid the more technical sections.”

The sport is still in its infancy, but has seen tremendous growth over the last decade. When asked what it is about the sport aside from the community that keeps him so interested, Jakob made a point that will really stick with lifelong fans of sports like skateboarding and snowboarding: “It’s at a similar place now where skateboarding was in the 90s. There is just an insane level of progression right now; people are doing tricks and lines that even a few years ago would have been considered impossible. It’s really cool to be a part of a scene that is growing and developing more every day.”

It will be interesting to see if the sport continues to see the growth and progression it has over the last decade, or whether this is just a flash in the pan or quirky novelty that some feel it is. It’s hard to argue with the numbers though, with attendees at Unicon going up each year. If you think riding a bike with two wheels is too easy, or you’re just looking for a new challenge, head down to your local bike shop and see what’s on offer. ■



Photos By Edward Bayley and Brendan Quinn  
Jakob and Simon rip it up in Gatineau Park, Quebec.





# FANTASY FAN-OMENON

Photo By Brendan Quinn

## The impact of fantasy sports on sports fandom.

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**I**t is a common sight in sports bars across the country: fans enjoying a comfortable Sunday with a beer, a basket of wings, and a good football game. But tucked away in the corner, there is a young man on his laptop, fanatically analyzing the individual stats of the week's games to ensure a victory in his fantasy football team.

The home team scores a touchdown. The fans cheer. But the young man in the corner, why isn't he happy?

Because none of the home team's players are in his fantasy league.

Does fantasy football take away the enjoyment of a team victory, by emphasizing individual stats instead of the ultimate achievement, a championship? Or does it allow the fan to enjoy the sport on two planes, the satisfaction of a home team victory and the individual achievement of the players in his league?

There are arguments both ways. Some say yes, it has the potential to take away the enjoyment of a home team victory and allow people to focus on individual stats, but, in the same vein, it also allows the opportunity to expand one's "rooting horizons."



### Birth of a Phenomenon

Modern fantasy football can be traced back to the late Wilfred “Bill the Gill” Winkenbach, an Oakland area businessman and a limited partner in the Oakland Raiders. The inaugural league was called the GOPPPL (Greater Oakland Professional Pigskin Prognosticators League), and the first draft took place in Winkenbach’s home in Oakland in 1963.

The league consisted of eight members, and the group would “draft” players throughout the NFL to play on their “teams.” The first pick of the league was by Winkenbach, who drafted Chicago Bears quarterback/placekicker George Blanda over such luminaries as Jim Brown and Johnny Unitas.

Fantasy football has exploded in popularity in recent years, with millions of armchair quarterbacks signing up for leagues. Players from across North America can access leagues on CBS Sports, Yahoo, TSN, and Sportsnet that offer their own leagues for the amateur pigskin prognosticator.

### The Internet Builds a Phenomenon

“The Internet,” says Scott Cullen, the director of TSN.ca’s fantasy leagues. “It allows anyone with a computer to interact with fellow sports fans.”

Cullen points out that the original fantasy fans had to be strongly invested in the game, as they had to check their statistics in the newspapers every week. “As much as people liked doing it at the time, it’s a much more complicated operation than it is now,” he says.

Alex Seixeiro, host of The Fan 590’s Sunday-morning The Fantasy Show, agrees. The ease of the Internet allows people to check their individual statistics almost immediately, to the point that people may not be following the game, but being glued to the stats on their iPhones or laptops.

“It’s changed how we spend Sundays,” he says. “If I don’t have my laptop and my phone [to follow stats] I feel naked.”

Scott Dennis, vice-president of marketing and sports development with the Ontario Colleges Athletic Association (OCAA) and sports information and marketing co-ordinator with Durham College, echoes Seixeiro’s and Cullen’s assertions. “Fans can draft online and check stats online,” he says. “It’s really opened up opportunities for people who may not have been really interested in sports before to become more invested in them.”

Francis Guilherme, a second-year kinesiology student at the University of Guelph-Humber, says the Internet makes fantasy “a video

game you don’t have to pay for.”

Dahlin Brooks, wide receiver from the McMaster University Marauders football team and an avid fantasy user, agrees. “The introduction of new technology definitely has made things a lot easier,” he says. “I know I never had a smart phone five years ago, and really wasn’t that interested in them – now I’m checking stats and changing my lineups all the time.”

### Is It Root, Root, Root for the Home Team – or the Fantasy Team?

But fantasy football has had its moments of awkwardness for its players. Peyton Manning, quarterback for the Denver Broncos and possibly the greatest player in NFL history, relates a conversation he had with a fan in a 2006 article for ESPN.com:

“Hey, Peyton, great game last night.”

“But we lost.”

“Yeah, but you scored four touchdowns, and that’s all I needed from you.”

Manning’s story is illustrative of the dis-

connect between fantasy fanatics and the team concept of most sports. Has it given rise to a concentration of individual achievement over the collective, which has been the linchpin of sport participation for time immemorial?

Many agree that the concentration on individual statistics versus team achievement can be seen in fantasy.

“People can really go overboard [with regard to fantasy sports],” says Cullen. “They become so obsessed with their fantasy teams that they lose their connection to the sport.”

Seixeiro says that many of the conversations he has with his colleagues at work after Sunday’s games involve discussions about which of their fantasy teams did the best.

Guilherme can see their point. “Sometimes I find myself watching [sports] not for the team but for the individual stats,” he says. Seixeiro points to a good case study, the 2013 Kansas City Chiefs. The team didn’t get much “love” in the fantasy world due to not having any superstar players, but still managed to pull together a successful season.

Aside from [running back] Jamaal Charles, there was no one on that team that

you would start in a fantasy position,” he explains. “But they were one of the best football teams in the first two and half months of the season.”

“But, from a fantasy perspective, it didn’t really mean much,” he says.

Brooks agrees. “One question I hear a lot is would you rather your team win the Super Bowl or would you rather win in your fantasy league,” he says.

But both Cullen and Seixeiro have also noted that the explosion in fantasy sports has also allowed fans to explore teams that they may not have paid attention to before.

“It’s a fun way for people to engage in other teams they may not have followed before,” says Seixeiro. He points out that he has found himself following the Arizona Cardinals lately, due to the fact that he has Arizona running back Andre Ellington on three of his four fantasy teams.

Cullen also argues that fantasy allows individuals to become more knowledgeable and involved in their sport of choice. “If you’re going to play fantasy, you have to be aware of all the teams,” he says. He points out that if you pick only players that you’re going to see regularly and only want to follow a few teams’ players, you’re handicapping yourself.

“Even here at TSN, there are guys who join leagues just so they can stay on top of things,” he says. “If you really want to learn about the entire league other than just the team you root for, fantasy’s a great way to get involved.”

Dennis says that he takes steps to avoid what he terms as “conflicts of interest” on his fantasy teams. “I’m a big Bills fan,” he says. “I avoid drafting Bills players to my fantasy teams so I can still root for them on Sunday.”

“My best case scenario is a Bills win and strong stats for the players on my fantasy team,” he says.

Brooks adds that another thing fantasy offers is the chance to look at players’ individual achievements. “It offers a chance to look at what a player can accomplish on the field,” he says. “It’s added an element to being able to follow players you never paid attention to before and be impressed by what they can do.”

**“If I don’t have my laptop and my phone [to follow stats] I feel naked.”**





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# THE MENTAL EDGE

By Edward Bayley

**Those who work in sports psychology use varied titles to describe themselves. In Ontario, the title of psychologist is a protected term, so in this article we use the term mental coach.**



Photos By Edward Bayley

Scott Brannigan yells and beats his chest after scoring a point.

“I’ve got power with my kill. I’m one of the fastest in the league.” These are the types of self-affirmations Charles Fitzsimmons, a mental coach and a Ph.D candidate for sports psychology, teaches his athletes to repeat to themselves. It’s just one skill that is used to keep athletes focused and mentally sharp. Sports psychology has become a large part of most professional sports. Athletes are always looking for an edge, and as the opportunities for physical advantages diminish, more and more athletes are working on their mental game. “The vast majority of athletes train their body, but how many train their mind?” Fitzsimmons wonders.

Nathan McFadden, Fanshawe College’s Manager of Athletics, made Fanshawe the first OCAA school to add a mental coach to its staff. McFadden previously worked as the Manager of Hockey and Team Operations for the Toronto Marlies and Maple Leafs and says that after seeing the impact this kind of training had at the professional level, it was something he thought was “very important to have,” when he joined Fanshawe and was looking for ways to improve the program.

Patrick Johnston, the head coach for the men’s volleyball team, says there was a lot of room for mental improvement. Opposing teams would often go on scoring runs and Johnston wanted his team to be better at limiting that. “Psychologically, there was huge room for growth there,” says Johnston.

Charles Fitzsimmons was brought on as a mental coach for the men’s and women’s volleyball teams at Fanshawe around the start of the 2013/14 season. His work with the teams consisted of meetings throughout the season where he would give lectures on mental skills, like visualization and self-affirmation, to keep them focused on the game during a match or during practice. Fitzsimmons says that athletes often let themselves get distracted by external factors. “I help them find a way to help their brain improve their performance rather than hinder it,” he says.

It may sound dubious to some, but mental coaches are trained and often come from athletic backgrounds. Fitzsimmons played golf and hockey, and still competes in golf at a high level as a Canadian amateur. “I think that gives me an important background in understanding what the pressures are like and what it takes to train at a high level,” he says “athletes are willing to listen a little more because I’ve been there.”

And his work with the teams showed results. McFadden and Johnston both agree there was a significant impact in performance. Although it might not be completely attributable to mental training, because of coaching changes and other additions to the athletics program during that season, McFadden says he has seen a marked improvement in all the teams that have worked with Charles, and that his feedback from players and coaches was “a resounding





Scott serves the ball to the opposing Humber Hawks.

thumbs up.”

Scott Brannigan, the current captain of the men’s volleyball team, says working with him brought the team closer together. “After our first couple sit downs with Charles, every time we knew we were going to see him it boosts team morale and gets everyone feeling really connected as a team,” he says.

After working with Charles, Brannigan now starts his preparation about 45 minutes before a game. He will visualize himself performing all the skills he’ll use during a game before-hand, which he says makes him more confident and comfortable when he is actually on the court and gets him into “volleyball mode.” This is one of the most important skills taught by mental coaches; the ability to keep your mind focused on the task at hand, whether that is scoring the next point or working on your game during practice. “It helps me get rid of the thoughts of everyday life like school, work, bills and everything like that,” says Brannigan.

It can be hard to find a quantifiable way of measuring the success of this type of training. We can measure how much someone can lift or how fast they can run, but an athlete’s mental toughness is more nebulous. The desired result though, for any team or individual, is to win, and Fanshawe definitely improved in that respect last season. The women’s volleyball team reached the finals and took home a silver medal for the first time in 42 years, and the men’s team, who finished 14th during the 2013/14 season, jumped to 3rd.

Other colleges in the OCAA considered hiring mental coaches leading into the fall

season. The George Brown Huskies were looking to hire mental coach, Josh Abel, around the start of the 2014/15 school year. They had posted an article on their athletics website welcoming him to the team, but didn’t end up hiring him. The Humber Hawks now have Kara Zakrzewski, a former Canadian world tour/pro beach volleyball player, who has completed her masters in sports psychology, to give their women’s volleyball team the edge that will bring them to the next level.

Zakrzewski says this type of mental training is what the top athletes are doing to set themselves apart. “What I see is that this is really the next wave of development in sport,” she says, and she attributes it to a societal shift in the way we are looking at the brain. As the conversation about mental illness and head injuries becomes more and more prevalent, not just in sports but everywhere, the way we view the brain has begun to change as well, and Zakrzewski says this needs to continue to change for mental training to become as universal in sports as physical training is.

“I think there is a stigma around it, like it’s not trainable,” she says “It’s the same as developing a physical skill like your serve or your stamina; it’s just another thing. And I think when people start relating it like that, and not like it’s an unsolvable or unfixable thing, I think that will go a long way.” She says she sees athletes opening up as those conversations become more common and understood.

Sports psychology needs to be embraced. Brannigan says “you have to buy into it. You have to actually want to be doing it and want to be putting in that effort,” but everyone

who approaches mental training and sports psychology with that attitude seems to swear by the effect it has on performance, and everyday life.

Part of the reason Nathan McFadden wanted to add this to Fanshawe’s athletics program in the first place was the transferability of these skills off the court or the field. Charles Fitzsimmons and Kara Zakrzewski both reiterate this idea, and Zakrzewski says that impact on life is why she is so passionate about this. “Why I love doing what I do is because as an athlete I know how much I beat myself up, and how in my head I was sometimes and how hard that was,” she says “I could really be abusive to myself in the way that I spoke. If I can reconnect an athlete to the fun, the enjoyment, the peace of mind, and why they started playing their sport in the first place, then that’s really the number one thing.”

She says she thinks these skills and this training could also become more regularly applied to non-athletes for use at work or just managing daily stress. Her company, Mental Toughness Inc., has developed a free app called Get Psyched because she says she wants everyone to have access to this information.

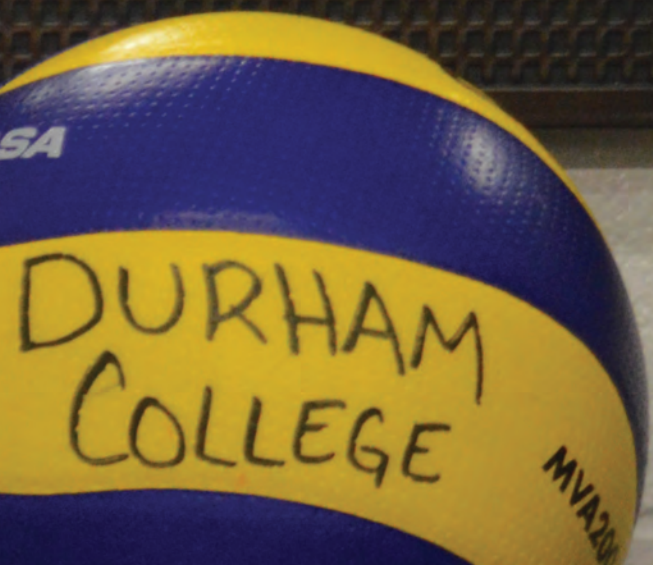
In the OCAA teams have already seen success after adding a way to work on their mental toughness in the same way they work on their physical strength and skill set. If the coming years bring more results for the teams that are adopting this then you can expect it to become a common part of college athletics in Ontario, because in sports an edge doesn’t stay an edge for very long. ■





By Comfort Obeng

Alysha Johnson applies lipstick in the Durham Lords Volleyball team changeroom.





# BEAUTY AND THE BALL

By Comfort Obeng

**B**lood, sweat, tears, and a coat of mascara. Is it a crime to look good and feel confident while playing a sport you're passionate about? Could it really be a crime to your skin? The answer: not so much.

Professional athletes are celebrated, idolized and used to endorse healthy products and lifestyles.

Athletes spend so much of their time in the public eye it's no wonder many want to put their best face forward.

On a cold fall morning Seneca hosted a track meet at the King campus where OCAA male and female cross-country runners took to a trail filled with hills at tough inclines and questionable weather causing muddy sticky conditions which makes it that much more difficult. Running, as simple as it sounds, is no easy task.

St. Lawrence cross-country runner Samantha Prendergast doesn't feel pressured into wearing makeup at these events. She does in fact like to wear two coats of mascara to cover what she calls her "neon blonde lashes."

Prendergast's go-to products are eyeliner and mascara and she wears that all the time. She swears that her waterproof mascara really stays put whatever the weather. Prendergast advises other female athletes who plan on wearing makeup while being active to "keep it simple."

Prendergast's teammate Stephanie Quosdorf feels no pressure as well when it comes to wearing makeup, but she also indulges by in wearing mascara. Quosdorf says, "I wear makeup every day just out of habit."

"I keep it the same every day but when I go out I like to add a bit of eye shadow," says Quosdorf.

Cheerful volleyball setter and a former team captain for the Durham Lords Alysha Johnson feels that women wearing makeup during practice or games is irrational. To her it's all about how you play and not how you look.

But at the same time Johnson knows that she could be biased due to the fact that her mother works in the cosmetology field. Johnson thinks that it could be because she's seen it all so she feels she doesn't need all the makeup. When she's having a night out with her friends she might dab on a little bronzer, eyeliner, eye shadow and mascara but refuses to add foundation onto her skin. On a daily basis she spends no time





By Lucy Hagerup-Labrosse

Debbie & Roshanna of the Humber Hawks Volleyball Team pose in their jerseys.

applying makeup at all.

“The less time the better, it’s more of a mental than a physical thing,” says Johnson.

Johnson recalls a time when she overheard a team getting ready for a game saying that they knew they were going to lose based on how good the other team looked. “Now automatically they’ve already lost the game. There is no way they’re winning after you (they) say that,” says Johnson.

And, she says that wearing makeup may play a larger role. By being mentally prepared for games you have a much bigger chance at achieving your goals. Putting on makeup might make a player feel confident. In the long run if you’re mentally prepared to play the game it doesn’t matter.

“You could be wearing pj’s and you’re just still going to play amazing if you’re mentally prepared,” says Johnson.

She realizes that the younger players are now more into wearing makeup than when she was in high school. She thinks that appearance and confidence mean a lot to teenagers more than ever before. She thinks they need to realize that it’s not just about how they look.

“You can have the best makeup in the world but it’s not going to make you play any better. That comes with training dedication

and putting it all together to come to a game and perform the best you can,” says Johnson.

“Putting on makeup might make you feel better but it won’t make you a better player.”

Captain for the Humber Hawks curling team Gen Bernier has a completely different point of view when it comes to looking and feeling good while playing the sport she loves. Bernier she feels proud of her role and wants to represent Humber College the best she can. To her that means not only dedicating Sundays for two hour practices with teammates, but making sure she does her high performance training once a week at the Humber gym and not to mention making time for games that usually take place Monday nights at a country club.

For Bernier being team captain is like being a mother bear. It’s not just making sure teammates show up and are coming to practices on time, she has to keep the team focused and positive. It’s also about being there for teammates whenever someone is having a hard time.

Bernier and her teammates enjoy wearing makeup but like keeping their looks natural. They play at the Weston Golf and Country club where you do in fact need to look a certain way to get in. Even though no one from Humber usually shows up to the games she

indulges in wearing concealer, eyeliner, and mascara.

“Curling is the same as a career. I show up and I have a job to do, you have to look the part,” says Bernier.

To Bernier looking professional means wearing Humber gear with her hair up in a ponytail. She says she wants to look good under any intense circumstance and that means putting on a good face as team captain.

Curling does indeed have a certain look. The men have to tuck their shirts in and everyone needs to be wearing all black on the ice. The women need to have their hair in a ponytail. Although this seems quite intimidating Bernier describes the sport as being classy, respectable, and professional.

“I feel so much more confident when I wear makeup. If I don’t have it on I look so sleepy and unkempt. I am not ready for the day, let alone a game with out it,” says Bernier.

She says she believes it depends what sport you play. Cross country runners will be sweating so much anything they put on will melt off. In Hockey the players wear helmets the whole time, so no one would be able to see anyway. she used to play softball, and would put on her makeup before a game. But it wouldn’t last very long.

“I wear makeup daily. I won’t leave the house without it. I feel naked and grubby,” says Bernier.

She washes her face every night before bed with Dove soap and then uses a Clean & Clear cleanser followed by a moisturizer.

“Really, it’s more unusual to not see makeup on someone,” says Bernier.

According to Toronto Dermatology Centre Dermatologist and Medical Director Dr Benjamin Barankin athletes should put more effort into protecting and caring for their skin as opposed to wearing makeup.

Makeup is always fun to play with but keeping the skin healthy is sometimes easier said than done. “Treat them don’t mask them,” says Barankin when advising how to care for acne found on the face. He further explains that makeup should be worn on a limited basis only if needed. If there are underlying skin problems like acne or uneven skin tone, it’s better to treat and clear the skin rather than cover it up. ■

*For more, visit ‘[www.sweatmag.com](http://www.sweatmag.com)’ to see a feature interview with a dermatologist regarding the use of makeup in sports and its effect on athletes’ skin*



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# THE ATHLETE'S FOOT

By Kate Richards

**T**orn skin, swollen toes, callused with the purple-black nail, blisters and bloody socks.

Even an athlete who takes special care of their feet to prevent these ailments can experience pain when their shoes come off after a game.

But maintaining healthy feet is no different than maintaining the rest of the body in general, even when focusing on athletes specifically. Considering that human feet contain 52 bones, which makes up about 25 per cent of the human body's skeleton, perhaps these delicate structures deserve some extra recognition.

Whether on the field or off the field, feet carry a huge burden so maintaining their well being can make all the difference in an athlete's performance. Some basic, but extremely important habits that any athlete should follow regularly include to always make sure one is well-hydrated, to make sure shoes and

socks are clean and dry, and to clean and wash feet regularly. Athletes sweat more when performing and therefore have a higher propensity for athlete's foot, infections in cuts, and bacterial infections so these simple habits can make all the difference in performance.

But, athletes need to take into account the many aspects of their sport in order to care for their feet properly as well.

"One of the first things is training routine," says Craig Hunt, the foot specialist at the London Foot Specialists clinic. "The equipment that is utilized as well as practice routines can be important for any high-performance athlete."

But, he says "the biomechanics of different sports also come into play. Starting and stopping (in soccer), jumping in volleyball, rotational movements on an uneven surface in golf." These are only a few examples of the vast number of the mechanical movements the foot and ankle undergo in sports.

Many athletes have underlying issues with their feet that cause a domino effect. Emma Pellegrino, 22, is one of these student athletes. It's her first year with the Seneca Sting and she suffers from bunions on both her feet; she plays goalkeeper on the women's soccer team.

She's had bunions since she was a four-year-old in gymnastics and said she thinks they are still growing.

"If someone steps on (my foot), it's like a shooting pain through my foot that travels all the way up above my hips," says Pellegrino. "I go down because I'm in excruciating pain and I'll crawl off the field but within five or 10

**"Running itself is painful, it hurts a lot. When you start pushing yourself there's no way around it."**





minutes I'm back in."

Not only does Pellegrino say that her bunions affect her style of play, she's also experienced shin splints, knee pain, and back pain; all of these health issues stemming from the pain she feels in her feet.

When she first started experiencing severe back pain, she went to a podiatrist who gave her orthotics.

"It was the worst experience of my life," she says. "I've never experienced as much pain as I did with orthotics."

Orthotics can become problematic when they are simply taken off the shelf without any assessment of the patient.

"If orthotics aren't made functionally, they will inhibit performance and that is a challenge," says Fareen Samji, a certified pedorthist as well as a three-time Canadian women's long drive golf champion.

"Sometimes someone will just give you an orthotic without assessing the situation which might be great for some people but for an athlete who has a very functional sport and a very specific shoe for that sport I think it's doing them an injustice," she says.

Samji has been working as a pedorthist in the industry for 15 years and says she has "seen the crappiest made orthotics in the world. It blows my mind that people actually give these orthotics to people."

Samji explained that a soccer shoe has very little room inside and to be able to fit an orthotic into a soccer shoe for an athlete, whose shoe is already tight due to bunions, is a challenge that needs a lot of consideration.

"If we're talking about someone with bunions, she's already stretching the side of the shoe to maximize the space she needs. She is going to need a bigger shoe to fit that orthotic. That means that she probably won't be able to feel the ball as well and it will totally affect her performance," says Samji.

In a situation like this Samji said that if an athlete had bunions but wasn't experiencing pain while they were on the field she would leave their shoes as-is. But it's important to

look beyond the sidelines.

Having the appropriate support in every day casual shoes is just as important. Not having proper support in the shoes an athlete wears off the field could make the problem worse.

"Sometimes athletes do more damage when they're in the gym working out than when they're on the soccer field," she says.

On the track, though, some runners purposely put their feet at risk to better their per-

**"You're going to be in pain no matter what so just do it."**

formance.

Cross-country running shoes (or spikes) are lightweight and very thin to allow as much movement as possible and have metal spikes on the sole. There is little to no wiggle room.

Two runners on the Humber Hawks' cross-country running team spoke to *sweat* about the reasons they choose not to wear socks in their spikes when running races.

"It feels less restrictive," says Jake Thomson, who's been on the team for two years now. "I don't know if that's actually the case but whatever helps my mentality for the race."

He says it makes him feel lighter, faster and he said he that some people prefer to go sockless because of sweat build up.

As a result of not wearing socks Thomson says his feet pay the price and he "110 per cent cares" more about the quality of his performance than some blood, cuts and blisters.

"I come out of races with my feet cut up pretty bad," he says. "But running itself is painful, it hurts a lot. When you start pushing yourself there's no way around it: the training hurts, stretching hurts, racing hurts, the cool downs hurt. You're going to be in pain

no matter what so just do it."

Sam Kirwin, 20, is on the Hawks' cross-country team as well and says that not wearing socks while racing makes him feel more in tune with the course.

"When I'm in a race I like to be able to feel the terrain and I can't feel that through the shoe with socks on," he says. "As a consequence of this I have blisters."

Kirwin also believes that performance outweighs maintaining healthy feet in the short-term but has doubts about what it could cause further down the road.

"In the short term, performance definitely outweighs taking care of my feet," he says. "As long as I know they're going to heal up in time for the next race."

But one teammate from last year's team helped him realize the importance of taking care of his wounded feet.

"One of our athletes last year got blisters from not wearing socks and didn't take care of his feet properly afterwards. He ended up getting an infection on his foot that put his training on hold for a while," he explained. "So I don't want (my blisters) to get to the point where... it hurts my training down the road."

Samji says she believes that a lot of high performance sport is focused on recovery and how quickly one can recover from a game or event before getting back on the course or field.

"If that means you'll get a couple blisters that will have to be managed in order to get (the athlete) back on the course again, maybe for longevity's sake that's not the best approach," she says.

But for many college athletes, a career as an athlete is not always the outcome of their varsity training.

"If you only have a two-year window before you aren't an elite athlete anymore in that particular category then maybe it's a sacrifice worth making," Samji says. ■





# MOST COMMON FOOT RELATED INJURIES



## TURF TOE

The metatarsophalangeal joint sprain, or an injury to the connective tissue between the foot and big toe.

**CAUSE:** Playing sports on artificial turf, usually from hyperextension of the toe joint.

**COMMON SPORTS:** Football, soccer, volleyball, rugby, basketball

## STRESS FRACTURES

Are fractures of the bone due to long-term repeated stress.

**CAUSES:** Falling, overuse, misstepping, impact from heavy weight. Improper training patterns, poor-quality shoes can contribute to stress fractures in feet.

**COMMON SPORTS:** High-impact sports such as volleyball, hockey, ballet, soccer.

## ACHILLES TENDINITIS

The overuse of the Achilles tendon, the tendon that connects the lower calf to the heel bone.

**CAUSES:** Over-stress and repetitive strain.

**COMMON SPORTS:** Running in old, worn-out shoes. Most common in sports that require lunging and jumping.

## ATHLETE'S FOOT

Also called Tinea Pedis. Is a fungal infection that usually begins between the toes. It looks like a "scaly" rash that causes itching, burning and stinging.

**CAUSES:** When feet become overly sweaty and are enclosed in tight shoes. This infection is contagious and can be passed on through communal floors.

**COMMON SPORTS:** Any sport that requires tight-fitting footwear. Soccer, running, football.

## PLANTAR FASCIITIS

One of the most common causes of heel pain. When the plantar fascia, which is the thick band of tissue on the bottom of the foot that connects the heel bone with the toes, becomes enflamed.

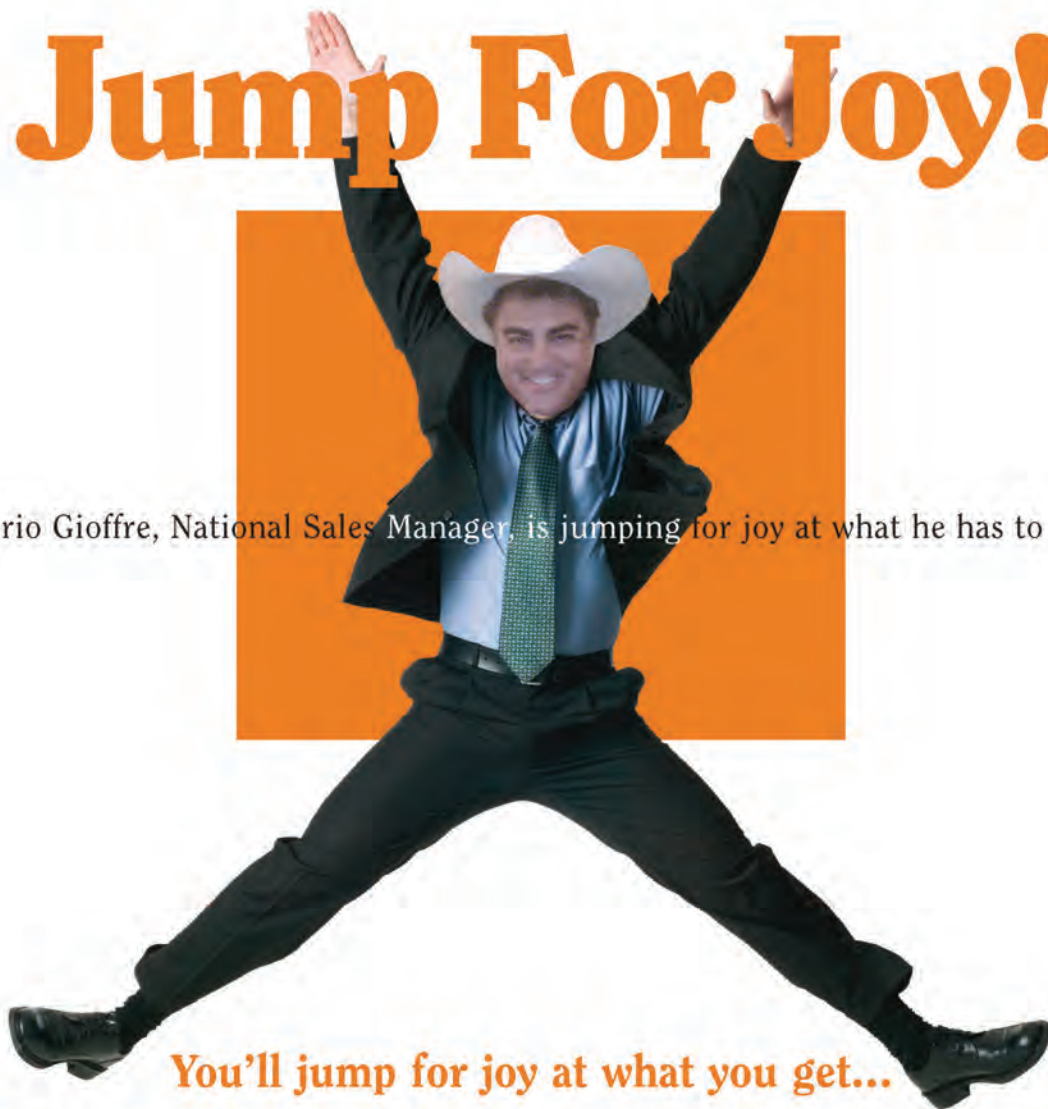
**CAUSES:** Obesity, over-stressing.

**COMMON SPORTS:** Long distance running, ballet. Activity that puts stress on the heel.



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# THE SOMBRE SIDE OF SPORTS

By Julianne Fox



Courtesy of Rob Avery

Katharyn Avery of the Georgian Grizzlies playing a game at Durham College.

**A**s an emotional person, Katharyn Avery sometimes felt like she couldn't even cry because she wasn't feeling anything at all.

When one with depression sinks so low inside themselves, it often takes more than one day to get out of the confusion of feelings.

"I would often just feel empty and sort of numb," says Avery.

She knew that something was seriously wrong, when she couldn't cry as a way to let emotions out. She also isolated herself from her friends and family. Without being able to describe what she was going through, she didn't want those closest to her worrying.

"It's really hard to describe and get people to truly understand," says Avery. "A lot of the time I would go off by myself."

Depression builds up over time, with many sufferers oblivious to the illness taking over every other thought in their head. Only people diagnosed with depression really know enough of what the illness is about. Avery says it took her a while to realize what was going on with her and that it wasn't how people are supposed to go through life.

Avery, a third-year Psychology student at Laurentian University at Georgian, has been struggling with depression for longer than she can remember.

With Avery's father also suffering from de-

pression, she says she should have been more familiar with the illness. However, she realizes now why it had been a difficult time in figuring out and dealing with the mental illness herself.

"I didn't really have a lot of the same symptoms as my dad because his depression comes from chronic back pain," says Avery. She says her father and her deal with their

**"Sport has shaped so much of the person I am that I would be completely lost without it."**

mental illness in very different ways. According to Avery, her father has a much better handle on his depression, considering he has had it much longer than her.

Avery says she is slowly learning how to deal with her mental illness and has become much more familiar with it.

"Grade 12 was my toughest year," Avery says. She did not have a healthy outlet at the

time and turned to self harm. She says this happened before she realized sports could help her significantly in escaping for the time needed.

Psychology professor at York University and Sheridan College, Peter Papadogiannis, says sports are actually a prescription for some people in addition to getting the medical help. "Exercise and just a healthy lifestyle is unbelievable in regards to the benefits of it," he says.

Avery also turns to music to help her through the hard times. She says even people she has never met inspire her and make her believe in success.

Avery plays on the women's volleyball team at Georgian College, in Barrie, and says sport is the ultimate outlet in helping her deal with her illness. Volleyball is a healthy way to divert her attention away from her illness.

A real advocate in dealing with mental illness in sports is the Canadian Olympian Clara Hughes. She is a six time Olympic medalist in both cycling and speed skating. Recently, Hughes was the flag bearer at the 2010 Vancouver Games and earned fifth place for cycling at her final Olympic race in London's 2012 Games.

Hughes has donated a generous amount of her earnings to sport initiatives and is perhaps best well known today as the spokesper-





Courtesy of Melanie Roy

Clara Hughes

son for Bell Let's Talk Day. This past year, she continued to raise awareness about mental health through Clara's Big Ride for Bell Lets Talk. She cycled across the country visiting almost 100 communities.

Hughes has connected with people on a very deep level of struggle and suffering. She lets others dealing with depression know "that they are not alone and [helps] them reach out and get help."

Hughes says sport for her has turned into a celebration of sharing all the struggle and joy she has come across throughout her journey as a high performance athlete.

"I think initially for me, sport was an outlet to numb the pain, and fill this empty void that I had," says Hughes.

If it was not for Hughes being completely inspired by the Olympics and having an intervention at an early stage in her life, she says her life would have gone in a much worse direction.

Growing up in a dysfunctional household, Hughes struggled with proper communication. She was also unlucky in the world of sport once she started training. "It led me to some really difficult environments psycho-

logically in the sport of cycling," she says. "I worked with a really abusive coach, and it was just a really negative environment." Her home and extra-curricular situations led her to a lot of personal issues.

"I used alcohol and drugs to numb the feelings and that confusion." She says she would have struggled with depression whether or not she got into sports. "I was making a lot of bad choices as a person [and] I would have been sick no matter what.

There is a lot of good work that's being done and it is really in a fundamental shifting point right now" says Hughes.

Depression wasn't openly talked about at the time Hughes needed help. Unlike Avery, it was more difficult for Hughes to find the help she needed in an era when depression wasn't spoken about openly.

Once Avery figured out she had depression, the confusing feelings she was having made a lot of sense. She says speaking about it with somebody helped tremendously. "I did speak to a psychologist who was local in Barrie and it did help eventually," she says.

Avery was also on Cipralext, a type of medication to treat depression, but has been off of it since last June. Other means of natural help, such as sport, began working so the medication was no longer needed.

Avery says sport has never done anything bad to her mental health, but can certainly see how it could.

"I really believe that if I didn't have sport I'd be a totally different person, and I'm not sure if that would be a good thing or not," says Avery.

Hughes says before she was diagnosed with depression, her support system was non-existent. She thought sport was the main problem and felt the need to quit. "You really die a death when you quit sports because life as you know it and have always known it is over," says Hughes.

At a time of dire need, Hughes was for-

tunate enough to receive an injury card after her director from the national team recognized her suffering. A medical doctor then confronted her and spoke with her about depression.

Hughes says she was incredibly lucky to be kept on a two-year contract with the professional team after quitting following the 1996 Olympics. They knew she needed a break and gave her one.

"I took the never training enough attitude to the point of exhaustion for years," says Hughes. The professional team decided to put her to other work like promotion, and allowed her to get better.

There is a lot of good work being done now for athletes and Hughes encourages people to never underestimate what they see in terms of an athlete struggling. "Do not think it is just about performance, look at the human first [and] performance will come if the human is okay," she says.

Avery's coach Brad Graham says coaching for him is more than the sport. Graham, who calls himself, along with other coaches, good-natured people, says he enjoys giving his time to help people realize their full potential not only as a player, but as a person.

Avery says her coaches haven't been very familiar with her illness, for it's something that never gets discussed.

"I want to be treated like the rest of my teammates, nothing special," Avery says. All she really wants from her coaches is for them to remind her when needed that they notice her struggling mentally and are there to talk about it with her. Avery likes being reminded she is not alone. Letting feelings escape through speech is rewarding for Avery, because it helps others understand where she is coming from.

If performance doesn't come from helping an athlete with depression, Hughes said, saving a life might. "That is more important than any gold medal or any performance." ■



Courtesy of Rob Avery

Katharyn Avery stands prepared as Erin McClean serves.



# COACH'S CORNER

## TRAINING THE BRAIN

By Charles Fitzsimmons

**T**o most people the word psychology or psychologist brings about images of sitting on a couch in a private room answering questions about their childhood. But when you work with a sport psychologist, you only have to sit on a couch if you want to be extra comfortable and chances are we won't talk much about your childhood. The majority of work in sport psychology revolves around getting generally happy and healthy athletes to perform better within their sport while also enjoying the challenges that accompany it. But who can help an athlete to perform better? Most elite athletes already have technical coaches, strength and conditioning coaches, nutritionists, and physiotherapists.

The problem is all of these specialists focus on the body. The reality is, every athlete trains their body but how many train their mind? That is where a sport psychologist would come in. Unfortunately, the rules in Canada regarding who can use the term "sport psychologist" are sometimes unclear and vary from province to province. Some are registered Clinical Psychologists, which requires a PhD in clinical psychology, who also work with athletes, while others might hold a PhD in kinesiology with a specialization in sport psychology and work exclusively with athletes.

The Canadian Sport Psychology Association uses the term "mental performance consultant" to describe the latter. An easier way to think of these specialists is simply as mental coaches. Whatever their exact educational background is, all mental coaches teach some form of performance psychology. In essence, they teach athletes how their mind can be an advantage rather than a disadvantage. To help athletes achieve this increased performance, mental coaches teach athletes a variety of mental skills. Just like the physical skills that athletes have honed over years of practice, these mental skills take time to learn.

One of the biggest challenges in mental coaching is that athletes and coaches expect immediate results from mental coaches. The belief exists that athletes can instantaneously learn mental skills and immediately apply them with maximal effectiveness. I have repeatedly received requests to work with teams or individual athletes only days before the big game. Would you call a strength and conditioning coach days before the big game and expect to see an improvement in performance? Unfortunately, there are no magic tricks in sport psychology. It requires hard work to learn and apply the mental skills taught by a mental coach in order to see improvements in the performance of an athlete or team. Just like improvements in strength and conditioning, learning mental skills takes time. But the athletes and teams that commit this time and effort often see improved performance, enjoyment and satisfaction.

Ultimately, my goal is to teach athletes to become their own mental coach. Doing so allows them to excel at the highest levels of competition while still enjoying a game they probably learned to love as a kid. I know, I said we wouldn't talk much about your childhood. But, if my work with you helps you to enjoy your sport as much as when you were a kid, while achieving performance you only could have dreamed about at that age, then I guess that's not the worst thing in the world. ■



Courtesy of Charles Fitzsimmons

Charles Fitzsimmons (left)  
coaching a golfer.

**Charles Fitzsimmons**  
**Mental Health Coach**



# OFF THE BENCH

## VARSITY VIEWS

By David Zheng

**P**laying competitive sports not only challenges you physically, but also tests the limits of your mentality. I believe most athletes would agree with me when I say your mental game is just as important as your physique. As a third-year student at UTM and participating in Varsity Badminton, it sometimes becomes overwhelming keeping up both in the courts and in the books. I constantly find myself balancing my academic life, athletic life, extra curricular activities, social life, and still having time left over for myself. Somehow I manage to get through it all, with little tricks that I use in my daily life which I apply to sports.

My psychology professor once said that it's important to keep a good 'psychological hygiene'. Like how we brush our teeth, we should meditate daily. Meditation is easy and helps keep your cool either during a game, test, or any other stressful situation. Before my ice hockey games I would visualize an amazing save I made or different plays the other team might make (I play in net). This gives you the courage to keep going, because if you don't believe you can make the save then you won't, or in badminton if you lose hope in making a shot you won't make it. As Wayne Gretzky once said " You miss 100 per cent of the shots you don't take."

Overall I'm really glad that UTM joined the OCAA before I graduated. The experience I have had so far has been great. The fact that you not only feel your own personal growth, but seeing your teammates hit harder, move faster, and become more confident on the court is more rewarding than just getting better alone. Off the courts I have seen how dedicated the administration of our athletics department is in promoting physical activity to all students on campus. Whether it's at budget meetings, or simply asking our opinion in jersey designs my experience with the department gave me a sense of their willingness to try new things and hear our concerns.

A good varsity program isn't only about the individual sports anymore. It brings people together and forms a sense of community, rallies the students behind something, or only encouraging individuals in the programs to strive for excellence but giving the student community something to be proud of. At the momentum the Eagles are going right now, I believe UTM will achieve that in no time. ■



Courtesy of David Zheng

**David Zheng**  
UTM varsity athlete



# THE SCOREBOARD

## Cross Country

Sept. 20 - At Fanshawe			
Race	Athlete	College	Time
5K Women's:	Morgan Hendriks	Fanshawe	20:06
8K Men's:	Riley Hubbard-Olesky	Fleming	27:22
Sept. 27 - At St. Lawrence (Kingston)			
5K Women's:	Morgan Hendriks	Fanshawe	19:44
8K Men's:	Rob Asselstine	St. Lawrence (K)	26:07
Oct. 4 - At Seneca			
5K Women's:	Lindsay Webster	Humber	20:58
8K Men's:	Riley Hubbard-Olesky	Fleming	28:42
Oct. 10 - At St. Lawrence (Brockville)			
5K Women's:	Ashley Bickle	Loyalist	20:29
8K Men's:	Riley Hubbard-Olesky	Fleming	29:03
Oct. 25 - OCAA Championships At Seneca			
5K Women's:	Lindsay Webster	Humber	20:38
8K Men's:	Riley Hubbard-Olesky	Fleming	27:53

## Women's Soccer

East Division	W	L	T	GF	GA	PTS
Algonquin	8	0	0	31	0	24
Seneca	7	1	0	34	1	21
Cambrian	6	2	0	41	9	18
St. Lawrence (K)	4	3	1	14	14	13
Loyalist	2	4	2	9	21	8
Durham	2	4	2	10	27	8
George Brown	2	5	1	8	33	7
Centennial	1	6	1	5	26	4
Fleming	0	7	1	3	24	1
West Division	W	L	T	GF	GA	PTS
Humber	7	0	1	25	3	22
Sheridan	6	0	2	28	7	20
Fanshawe	5	1	2	28	7	17
St. Clair	4	2	2	18	8	14
Mohawk	3	4	2	8	17	10
Conestoga	2	3	1	10	18	9
Redeemer	1	5	3	8	23	5
Niagara	1	7	2	6	16	3
Lambton	0	7	1	6	38	1
Women's Soccer Final	Gold	Silver	Bronze			
	Seneca	Algonquin	Cambrian			

## Women's Rugby

East Division	W	L	PF	PA	Bonus	PTS
Fleming	5	1	180	108	5	25
Algonquin	4	2	170	112	7	23
St. Lawrence (K)	2	4	92	157	2	10
Loyalist	1	5	125	190	4	8
West Division	W	L	PF	PA	Bonus	PTS
Humber	6	0	428	0	6	30
Seneca	5	1	313	32	5	25
Conestoga	3	3	172	148	3	15
Sheridan	1	5	61	338	2	6
Mohawk	0	6	22	478	0	0
Women's Rugby Final	Gold	Silver	Bronze			
	Humber	Seneca	Fleming			

## Women's Softball

	W	L	RS	RA	PTS
St. Clair	14	4	150	45	28
Durham	14	4	148	66	28
Conestoga	12	6	121	56	24
Humber	10	7	102	81	20
Fanshawe	8	10	106	112	16
Seneca	4	14	108	108	8
Mohawk	0	17	30	268	0
Women's Fastball Final	Gold	Silver	Bronze		
	St. Clair	Conestoga	Durham		



## Golf

Sept. 15 - At Fleming			Score
Women's:	Maria Nova (Seneca)		78
Men's:	Jeff Beedham (Georgian)		75
	Matt Lemay (Georgian)		75
Sept. 18 - At Durham			Score
Women's:	Lorelle Weavers (Niagara)		77
Men's:	Matt Lemay (Georgian)		74
	Brent Clements (Durham)		74
Sept. 20 - At Fanshawe			Score
Women's:	Lorelle Weavers (Niagara)		74
Men's:	Tyler Cameron (Georgian)		75
	Brent Clements (Durham)		75
	Mike Rizzetto (Mohawk)		75
Sept. 22 - At Niagara			Score
Women's:	Lorelle Weavers (Niagara)		76
Men's:	Curtis Harlley (Humber)		70
Sept. 29 - OCAA Championships to Oct. 1 At Fleming			Score
Women's:	Mike Rizzetto (Mohawk)		217
Men's:	Adrienne D'aleccio (Humber)		222
Women's Team:	St. Clair		495
Men's Team:	Humber		892

## Men's Soccer

East Division	W	L	T	GF	GA	PTS
Algonquin	7	0	0	19	2	21
Durham	5	2	0	13	8	15
Centennial	4	1	2	18	10	14
Seneca	4	3	0	13	11	12
Cambrian	1	4	2	9	13	5
St. Lawrence (K)	1	4	2	8	14	5
Fleming	1	5	1	8	19	4
George Brown	0	4	3	7	18	3
West Division	W	L	T	GF	GA	PTS
Humber	6	0	2	29	4	20
Sheridan	6	1	1	39	7	19
St. Clair	5	1	2	18	14	17
Niagara	5	3	0	14	17	15
Redeemer	2	3	3	11	19	9
Fanshawe	3	5	0	17	19	9
Lambton	2	4	2	10	25	8
Conestoga	0	6	2	9	25	2
Mohawk	0	6	2	12	29	2
Men's Soccer Final	Gold	Silver	Bronze			
	Algonquin	Humber	Sheridan			

## Men's Rugby

East Division	W	L	PF	PA	Bonus	PTS
Trent	5	1	234	116	6	26
Fleming	4	2	195	99	2	18
Algonquin	3	3	250	136	6	18
St. Lawrence (K)	3	3	136	118	2	14
Seneca	2	4	107	193	1	9
Loyalist	1	5	59	319	1	5
West Division	W	L	PF	PA	Bonus	PTS
Humber	6	0	528	0	6	30
Georgian	4	2	183	157	6	22
Conestoga	4	2	141	162	5	21
Mohawk	1	5	92	334	1	5
Sheridan	0	6	30	321	0	0
Men's Rugby Final	Gold	Silver	Bronze			
	Humber	Trent	Algonquin			

## Men's Baseball

	W	L	RS	RA	PTS
St. Clair	19	1	163	37	38
Humber	12	6	150	82	24
Fanshawe	11	7	142	81	22
Durham	11	9	126	96	22
George Brown	3	17	62	181	6
Seneca	2	18	41	207	4
Men's Baseball Final	Gold	Silver	Bronze		
	St. Clair	Durham	Fanshawe		





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