



Photo by Gavin Weiskopf

THE PAST: “A lot of my mental fortitude is derived from confidence in my appearance and I am never fitter than when I am in season. This heightened body image definitely boosts my mental health. My self image and my all-encompassing view of my material accomplishments has also generally benefited from playing soccer. When I first began to play, the sense of companionship I was able to find with some teammates also boosted my mental health. Freshman and sophomore year, I would tend to think that playing soccer was a massive benefit to my mental health. The sense of accomplishment, the physical activity and the companionship were all things I was in desperate need of as I began my high school career.”

THE STRUGGLES: “As a person with social anxiety, every alienated feeling I’ve ever had – worrying that I’m not fitting in, general awkwardness – is so painfully amplified by playing this sport. Not to mention, the pressure to perform is emotionally crippling at times. Every mistake I made this past season dragged my mental health further and further down and I grew ever more concerned that I was not fit to walk beside my teammates. Such abundant disappointment in myself bled into every facet of my life, and I can positively say that my mental health suffered immensely in this most recent season in particular. Now, I would wager that my response may vary from others on account of a simple truth: I am not all that good. Some people will likely fly highest during the season, thriving off of every triumph and priding themselves on good performances. I don’t have such a luxury. And as the cherry on top, balancing playing a sport with a fairly intense

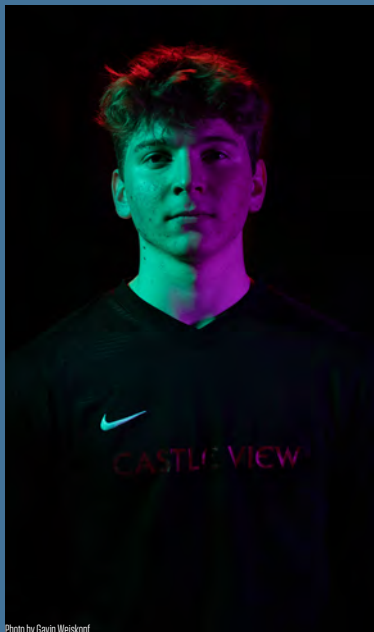


Photo by Gavin Weiskopf

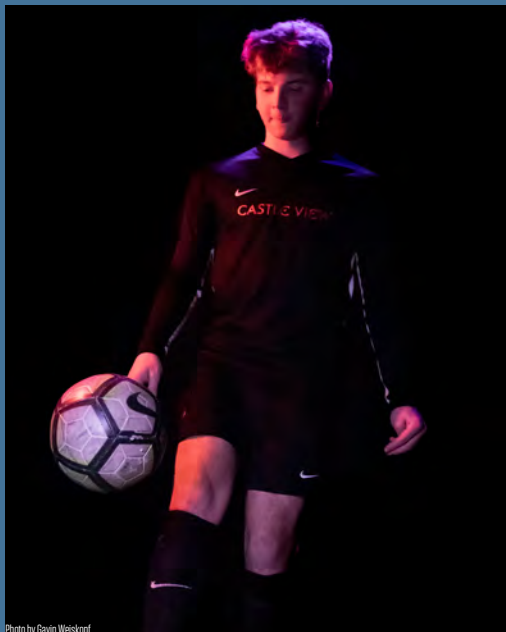


Photo by Gavin Weiskopf

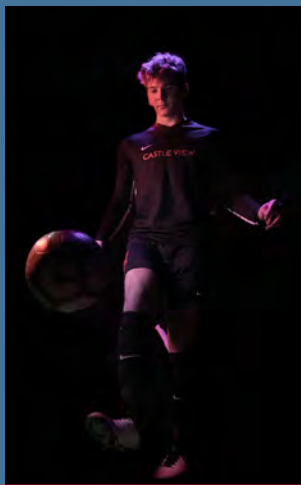


Photo by Gavin Weiskopf



Photo by Gavin Weiskopf

academic schedule is a challenge. This year, with the pressures of varsity, there were certainly a larger share of negative impacts. The novelty of being a part of the program has begun to wear off a bit and the positives have lost some of their shine.”

THE MOTIVATION: “My mental health is better off than it would’ve been had I not played to begin with, but finds itself on intermittent downward trends from time to time. It’s like climbing up a mountain, tripping and falling down halfway. My motivation has varied across seasons, but having finished my junior season and planning to continue playing senior year, there are a few main motivations. Firstly, the improved body image. I seldom struggle to will myself into physical activity on my own, but it’s always nice to follow a program and protocol which is built to get players into shape. The conditioning program we do for soccer is grueling, rigorous and one of my favorite summer pastimes. Secondly, a love for the sport. I watch every game I can, keep up with all my favorite teams and absolutely love to go out with friends and kick a ball around. I really enjoy playing and I look forward to continuing to do so next year. Thirdly, the emotional connections I have within the team. I have some good friends on the team and there’s a definitive sense of camaraderie. I’m excited to continue to grow, mature and play alongside my friends. Lastly, I am aware of the benefits of demonstrating commitment to colleges. By continuing to play next year, rounding out four years as a student-athlete, I am showing colleges that I am able to commit.”



How has cheerleading affected your mental health and your experience with cheering for CV?

CHEERLEADER EXPOSES THE NEGATIVE TOLLS THAT CHEER TAKES ON HER MIND

NOT JUST a game

GRACE SAID

“Poms helped me so much because rather than focusing so much on image, our priority is athleticism. When I made varsity, stepping into practices was an eye opener because it was the most physically demanding that I had ever been. The most disheartening part of all of this was realizing that my eating disorder was impacting my ability to participate in and improve at the sport that mattered so much to me. When I realized this, I became motivated to get better because I wanted to perform to the best of my ability,” Grace Coyne ‘23 said.

ELLIE SAID

“When you show up [to practice] and other people are relying on you and you’re relying on them, it’s just this really unique bond between everybody. I think that it’s just that special connection that everyone craves everyday. I know that being a part of a group where everyone has a commonality, even just one, allows me to feel like I belong somewhere. There are so many ways that feeling of belonging plays into mental health. Having that feeling of belonging reduces anxiety and depressions and suicide rates,” Ellie Lansdown ‘22 said.

“Cheerleading has affected my mental health in a more negative sense than positive. I love the sport and will keep doing it for as long as I can but the commitment and wear it puts on an already busy high school student is crippling. Cheerleading is very dangerous and the chances of getting injured are constantly present. Athletes in cheerleading, especially at Castle View, are fully committed and put so much effort into this sport all year round. Our efforts have paid off, but even so we hardly get the recognition we deserve. It’s unfulfilling to not be credited for our achievements just because some don’t see cheerleading as a sport. With this stigma it’s very difficult to want to keep going to practice because the only praise we get is from fellow athletes or coaches,” Gracie Garcia ‘23 said.

ON the UPSIDE

VARSITY CROSS COUNTRY RUNNER AND VARSITY POMS DANCER EXPRESS HOW THEIR SPORTS BENEFIT THEIR MENTAL HEALTH ON A DAILY BASIS

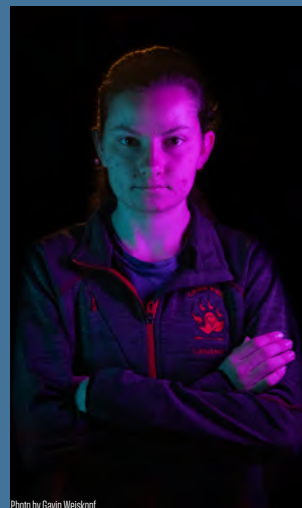


Photo by Gavin Weiskopf

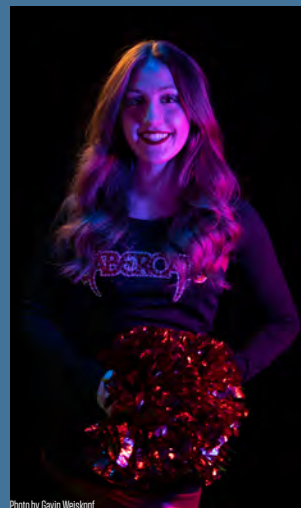


Photo by Gavin Weiskopf



where to go for HELP

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THOSE LOOKING TO SEEK HELP

TO TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT EATING DISORDER RELATED THOUGHTS OR ACTIONS, PLEASE CALL: (800) 931-2237.

TO FIND INFORMATION ON TREATMENTS, FACILITIES OR CONTACT INFORMATION GO TO: www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline.

TO TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT FEELINGS OF SUICIDE OR SELF-HARM, PLEASE CALL: (800) 273-8255.

BREAKING DOWN the mindset

35% of elite athletes suffer from disordered eating, burnout, depression and/or anxiety.

expectation

“I thought going into the recruiting process would be harder. You get turned down a lot in the recruiting process and some coaches will lead you on. There can be lots of mean people you’re playing against but if you have thick skin and keep going it ends up being fun.”

UNEXPECTED recruitment

THE NUMBERS AND STATISTICS BEHIND ATHLETE’S MENTAL HEALTH

Overall, it was found that **33.5%** of the sample reported clinically significant levels of depression

“Young male and female athletes tend to be at a **greater risk** for having an eating disorder if they play sports that focus on **personal performance, appearance, diet, and weight requirements.**”

1 in 5 athletes may be depressed.

reality

“[COVID-19] definitely made the process go slow so there was no pressure to commit if I didn’t know yet. When I had my injuries some scholarships got pulled because I would be out for a year. I realized how much I truly love the sport once I couldn’t play so it made me wanna commit even more and to be a part of a team in college.”

MARIANNA CARPENTER ‘22

DEVELOPMENT PLAYER LEAGUE RUSH AND VARSITY SOCCER PLAYER INJURES HERSELF AND THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS CHANGED HER EXPECTATIONS

“Mental health is a top priority in our program. Our athletes are family, not just teammates. Under our ‘family first’ motto, our athletes always know that coaches have an open door policy. As a coach, it is my goal to make sure our athletes feel safe in knowing that first and foremost they are loved, supported, and never judged.”

MS. ALEXIS GODFREY

high pressures and DESPERATE MEASURES

BREITIN CURL ‘23 NARRATES HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH SOCCER; THE GOOD AND THE UGLY

