

 As my alarm clock buzzes at 5 a.m. for weights or conditioning, the first thought running through my head is "Will I have enough time to schedule a nap?"


Sleep is at the top of any student-athlete's priority list. A small window of 10

minutes would suffice for an opportunity to get some shut eye. Our team arrives to workouts at least 30 minutes early because similar to many teams, we live by the saying "If you are on time, you are late." The benefit of waking up early to workout is not thinking about it all day long. As most of my teammates say, "Working out that early makes it feel like it was just a dream!"


Workouts are demanding, but knowing you are part of a team working towards a higher goal makes the process easier. And although the workouts don't get easier, mentally they are easier to get through. After workouts, I hope to have enough time to get in a quick


 shower because without one I can only guess the discomfort I inflict on the classmate sitting next to me. Our team has found ways to handle the days we do not have time to shower by packing our bookbag with essentials such as change-of-clothes (typically sweatpants and t-shirt), body spray, and a thick headband (we like to call it a "greaseband") to cover our hair.

 Walking to class can be a muscle-building workout of its own. Our bookbags are not only packed with a day's worth of books and notebooks, but arguably an equal amount of food and clothes. Essentially, we live out of our bookbags, so one can only imagine the weight we carry around each day. Typically we can be seen walking to class with our breakfast in hand. Eating on the go is an essential tool to master as a student-athlete. While it may seem to some as if the world is weighing us down, being a student-athlete is an elite class. We walk around with our heads held high, knowing we are part of something bigger and better than ourselves. We have pride walking through campus in our UK gear; the same gear we tend to wear every day which leads to comments from classmates the one day we show up in jeans with our hair not in a ponytail like "why are you dressed up today?" It always gets a laugh when we talk about it that day at practice.

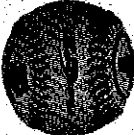
 The best part of the day comes after morning and afternoon classes - practice. Before we get to practice, getting in a good lunch is crucial. If we are lucky, we get to the locker room with time to spare in which we can fit in a short snooze on the comfortable couches.

As soon as practice ends, the first thing on everyone's mind is dinner. For the few who live on campus, they have the luxury of eating at the dining halls. It is common to get tired of the food at the dining halls by the end of the semester, but as soon as any of us move off campus we start to miss the convenience of not having to prepare or clean up after meals. Designing a weekly meal plan has been an easy way to take out the decision making and minimize preparation of meals. Tupperware is fundamental to own for leftovers when living in an apartment.


 Once our stomachs are full, some of us head to night class while others head over to the tutoring center. Tutors are vital to surviving classes as a student-athlete, especially during season when it seems as if we miss more classes than we attend. Academic personnel and tutors are one of the top benefits of being a collegiate athlete.

 Walking through the front door at the end of the day is like coming home after a long vacation. Each day is so packed that it is perceived it couldn't have all happened in a single day. It is also the reason time seems to fly by during the four years. Everyone spends their free time differently, some like to get ahead on school work, while others prefer lounging on the couch watching movies. Free time for me is all about relaxing and recharging for the mental and physical grind of being a student-athlete. Right before going to sleep, multiple alarms are set to avoid the "stomach-drop, small heart attack feeling" of waking up late for workouts.

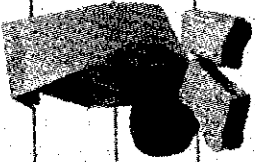
Even though there are moments of doubt and struggle, the joy of being in the elite group as a collegiate athlete is well worth it. It is one of the few times in life when there are people beyond people supporting you and helping you reach your full potential. The life of a student-athlete is an amazing experience that neither I nor my teammates would ever trade.

 *Kara Dill*
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playing college ball? Depends who you ask... We asked two student athletes to tell us what a typical day is like for them



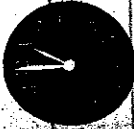
My day begins with a 6 a.m. alarm and I hit the floor at the first beep to get dressed for classes. Cereal is my breakfast and I always save time for it because breakfast is the most important meal of my day.




My first class starts around 7:30 a.m. and my last class usually ends just before noon. There is not much time to study or work on assignments between classes.



I usually bring my lunch, but if not, I will pick up a sandwich and enjoy lunch before heading out to practice.



Regular practice begins at 1:30 p.m., but we have to be there thirty minutes early to participate in yoga conditioning. Practice is normal with some hitting, fielding, throwing and situation work. Sometimes we run hills for additional conditioning at the end of practice.



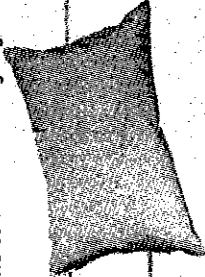
After practice, it is time to return to the apartment and fix something to eat. Then it's study time. The team has required study hall four hours a week and we face severe consequences if we don't log in these hours.

I don't have much free time, but when I do, it's usually on weekends when we don't have any scheduled games. I enjoy this time just hanging out with my dad or with some of my friends.

I try to be in bed by 10 p.m. every night, but it really depends on the amount of homework I've been assigned. Getting a good night's sleep is important to me so I really try to hit the 10 p.m. target.



RULES QUIZ!
T OR F! (SEE P3 FOR INSTRUCTIONS)

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- 2) Interference is the act of a defensive player or team member which impedes or confuses an offensive player attempting to execute a play.

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