Are Sports Good or Bad For Your Mental Health?
By Hannah Schroeder I September 29, 2020

While participating in sports such as football, basketball, track, etc may benefit your mental health, there may also be downsides to it.

Data shows that 35% of professional athletes struggle with mental health. This means that more than ⅓ of elite athletes struggle with mental health. Think of your favorite player or runner or wrestler, there's a ⅓ chance that they are struggling with some sort of mental health issue.

So what makes student athletes have more stress than the regular student? Student athletes go through different things than the general student would. Going through different circumstances and constantly facing new challenges causes not just stress on

the body, but on the mind. This causes student athletes to be at a higher risk of anxiety and depression. Athletes will face the constant stress of performing well, maintaining a social life, excelling in your sport, attempting to achieve your goals, over training their body, judgement from social media, injuries, and more.

It's hard enough for the general student or person to find the courage to go get help, but on top of that, athletes also feel that they need to be tough and superior to their peers, so very rarely do you see student athletes going to get help or counseling. Going to college is stressful for the average student, but could you imagine playing a sport too? The two a day practices, going to school, studying, doing your homework, and making sure you eat the right amount, some may say they don't even have the time to go get help.

Champion swimmer Michael Phelps says, "I remember sitting in my room for four or five days not wanting to be alive, not talking to anybody. That was a struggle for me… I reached that point where I finally realized I couldn't do it alone." In case you didn't know, Michael Phelps has 28 total medals, 23 of those are gold. This is a very successful athlete speaking out about how he didn't want to be alive.

Could you imagine being that good at a sport and still not wanting to be alive? Most likely you can't. Everyone expects athletes to be okay, especially prosperous ones like him, but it turns out that most of the ones like him are the ones facing the hardest battles.