

# Athletes

Ever since I was five years old, I fell in love with the game of football, and that passion continues to course through my veins. This passion keeps me up at night while I think about all the great things that football has provided for my family and I. My dad was an Olympic runner for his country and I decided that I wanted to keep the athletic tradition going. Instead of going for an individualized sport, I opted to play football and take a chance on a sport that I had no clue about. I wasn't the best kid out there on the field, and I struggled for quite some time. Day in and day out, I was determined to become a better football, and I was confident that I would get to where I wanted to be. I played middle school football at Ysleta Middle School and city football with various teams around the El Paso area. Fast forward to my freshmen year of high school, I got bumped up to play varsity football for the Ysleta Indians, and this pivotal point in my life is where I grew not only as an athlete but as a person

To begin with, I was playing so well on the freshmen team that the coaches immediately wanted me to play with the varsity team. Being able to play at the highest level at the high school level was all attributed to starting at a young age and keeping up with getting better. It wasn't easy being a freshman amongst seniors that were huge and were fast. I felt out of place, but I had a goal in mind to become a better football player and show these guys how I play. I got as many reps as I could at practice and soon started to improve little by little. On game days, I did not see the field very much just because I was small in stature, and they did not want

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me to get hurt. I decided that I would continue to support my team and my school on game days and be their biggest fans. I am a huge offensive guy, so when we had the ball, I cheered "offense," "offense," "offense" over and over. I brought a type of energy that the team needed and showed that we could defeat any team as long as we played as one. I wanted to be the team's biggest cheerleader, and I was. In one game, I did see playing time was our rivalry game against Riverside. We were down, and we need points, so they threw me in, and I ran a hitch route, caught the ball and took it to the house. That touchdown alone gave us the momentum to win the game. All my teammates showed me love and respect, just as I did to them when they would score. I was the man on campus, but there was more to school than just football. I was able to maintain a perfect 4.0 GPA during my freshman year, and I finished number five in my class. I received awards such as most outstanding in law I, Biology, and English student while taking Pre-AP courses. Unfortunately, however, I suffered a horrible knee injury that ended my season, but I was not going to let that take away from my academics. I continued to stay focused on my work while also going to therapy and getting my knee back to playing shape.

During my sophomore year, coming off, my knee injury was a learning year. I wasn't as sharp or as crispy as I was before, and to make matters worst, we finished with a losing record. It was my worst year ever, but I continued with my academics and again finished in the top ten and received most outstanding in law II and English II. I was even able to get selected into the NHS. Onto my Junior year, it was my comeback year. The summer prior, I was working hard in the sun and the gym. My Quarterback and I had a reliable connection, and I was averaging five receptions per game. I got noticed throughout the city, and teams had to plan for my presence.

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I played every game as if I was my last and made sure I felt it all out on the field. Families and children would come up to me and talk to me about academics, football, and life. They looked up to as a role model. I even took Dual Credit courses from El Paso Community College to challenge myself, and I was named to the Dean's and Presidential list for maintaining a very high GPA. I again made the top ten; however, this would be my final year of playing since I tore my meniscus my senior year. It was my best year yet, and offers started to roll in. Colligate coaches understood my situation as I sat out my senior year of high school, but they offered me because they saw the potential and wanted to work with me. That college was McMurry University, and they said I am the kind of person that can be a huge game changer and make the program better. Even though I did not play, I had a ton of people who continued to follow me, check up on me, and make that I was okay. I was even named a team captain for my final year. I was so humbled that people did not care about my injury, but how I was as a person. On the academic side, I was rocking! I placed first place at the school science fair and second place at district. I got inducted to NEHS and SNHS while continuing to take college courses. I knew that football was over for me, but not my academics. I now have an excellent opportunity to get an education and play football at the collegiate level, and I am ecstatic!

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