

### ABSTRACT

Being an athlete my whole life, and a current college athlete, I have seen how injuries can really take a toll on an athlete, not just physically, but mentally as well. The first time I was ever exposed to the idea of sports psychology was just last year when Monmouth added a full-time sports psychologist to the athletic staff. I began to think of how sports psychology could be a helpful resource to aid recovery as well as how it could be incorporated into return to play. Most current return to play protocols includes a variety of physical tests and a brief survey about the athlete's mental health to assess if additional resources are needed or if the athlete is mentally ready to return. I believe that sports psychology is an effective method for promoting a positive injury rehabilitation process and can be utilized by Division 1 programs to help athletes work through and cope with any mental issues they may be having and feel more confident returning to play.

### MENTAL HEALTH

**1 in 5** student athletes experience some sort of mental health challenge, less than half will seek help.

### DATA COLLECTION

- Survey Based
- Monmouth University Athletes who have sustained an injury during their college career
- Attitudes toward sports psychology
- Experiences with a sports psychologist
- Evaluate their overall recovery experience physically and emotionally

### SPORTS PSYCHOLOGIST

- Enhance performance
- Cope with pressure
- Control emotions
- Work on communication
- Recover from injury
  - Goal setting
  - Visualization
  - Stress relief exercises
  - Increase motivation
  - Increase Confidence
  - Return to participation

### RETURN TO PLAY

Concussions	Musculoskeletal	Surgery
- Series of balance and cognitive tests	- Strength levels	- Strength levels
- Self-reporting symptoms	- Sport specific movements (cutting, jumping)	- Follow up scans
		- Mobility
		- Psychologic readiness

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- In general, what is the attitude of student athletes toward seeking mental health treatment / what is their willingness to seek help, especially post injury?
- What is the best way to get student athletes to seek treatment if they are apprehensive?
- In what ways can sports psychology address mental health issues athletes face while injured?